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**Agriculture & Natural Resources  
Committee**

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**HB 1210**

**Brief Description:** Regarding the standardization of salmon fishing time for gill net gear and purse seine gear in Puget Sound.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Blake, Chandler, Kretz and Takko.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Requires, with exceptions, the Fish and Wildlife Commission to adopt rules ensuring equal commercial salmon fishing time between gill nets and purse seines in the Puget Sound.

**Hearing Date:**

**Staff:** Jason Callahan (786-7117).

**Background:**

The Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) may authorize commercial salmon fishing seasons in certain portions of the Puget Sound during designated times of the year. The Commission is also responsible for identifying lawful gear types that may be used to harvest salmon commercially. Along with identifying gear types, the Commission is also responsible for identifying the details as to where and when each gear type can be used, as well as how many fish may be collectively captured with each gear type. These fishing gear types include purse seines, gill nets, drift gill nets, and skiff gill nets.

A purse seine is a type of fishing gear that utilizes mesh net webbing fashioned so that it encircles fish and prevents their escape under the net by drawing in the bottom of the net to form a closed bag (WAC 220-16-075). A gill net is a flat, square net that suspends vertically in the water and captures fish by their gills. A gill net can be either a drift gill net, which is not

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anchored or tied in a manner that prevents drifting, (WAC 220-16-040) or a skiff gill net, which is attached to floats (WAC 220-16-046).

**Summary of Bill:**

The Commission is required to adopt rules specifying weekly fishing schedules for gill net and purse seine gear any time that commercial salmon fishing is authorized in the Puget Sound. The weekly schedules must ensure that there is an equal amount of time provided for both gear types to take salmon during each week, and that the ability to fish on the first day of the weekly opening alternates between the two gear types. This arrangement is referred to as the equal time provision.

The Commission may adopt rules contrary to these equal time requirements if one of three conditions is met. These conditions are as follows:

- Direct on-water sampling estimates show a disproportionate amount of non-target fish bycatch mortality associated with one or both of the gear types.
- An economic analysis of Puget Sound commercial salmon fishing conclusively demonstrates that allocating a greater amount of time to one gear type over the other will improve the economic well-being and stability of the entire fishing industry.
- The total allowable harvest is insufficient to allow openings for both gear types.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.