

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1340

As of March 15, 2011

Title: An act relating to unlawful hunting of big game.

Brief Description: Regarding the unlawful hunting of big game.

Sponsors: Representatives Kretz, McCune, Johnson and Warnick.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/28/11, 97-0.

Committee Activity: Natural Resources & Marine Waters: 3/14/11.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & MARINE WATERS

Staff: Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

Background: Role of the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW). DFW serves as manager of the state's fish and wildlife resources. Among other duties, DFW must protect and manage fish and wildlife, including establishing the time, place, manner, and methods used to harvest or enjoy fish and wildlife.

Unlawful Hunting of Big Game in the Second Degree. Unlawful hunting of big game in the second degree is a gross misdemeanor. Under certain circumstances, such a violation results in a two year suspension of hunting privileges. A person is guilty of unlawful hunting of big game in the second degree if the person:

- hunts for or possesses big game without all required licensing documents; or
- violates bag limits, time, place, and manner restrictions, or other rules established for the hunting or possession of big game.

Unlawful Hunting of Big Game in the First Degree. Unlawful hunting of big game in the first degree is a class C felony. Such a violation results in a ten year suspension of hunting privileges. A person is guilty of unlawful hunting of big game in the first degree if the person commits an act that qualifies as unlawful hunting of big game in the second degree within five years of a conviction of unlawfully hunting or possessing big game.

Big Game Animals. Big game animals include deer, elk, moose, mountain goat, caribou, cougars, and black and grizzly bear.

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Summary of Bill: Expands the Scope of Unlawful Hunting of Big Game in the First Degree. In addition to its current elements, a person is subject to unlawful hunting of big game in the first degree if the person commits an act that qualifies as unlawful hunting of big game in the second degree that involves hunting for or possessing three or more big game animals within the same course of events.

Defines the Term Same Course of Events. The term same course of events means within a 24-hour period or a pattern of conduct evidencing a continuity of purpose.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The bill attempts to address serious poaching violations, including multiple violations known as spree killing. It is appropriate to increase penalties for these blatant violations. Examples have included incidents where a person shoots a herd of animals, leaving the carcasses to waste or taking select parts.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Kretz, prime sponsor; Bruce Bjork, Mike Cenci, DFW.