

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5760

As Reported by House Committee On: Agriculture & Natural Resources

Title: An act relating to providing compensation for commercial crop damage caused by bighorn sheep.

Brief Description: Providing compensation for commercial crop damage caused by bighorn sheep.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Natural Resources & Parks (originally sponsored by Senator Parlette).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Natural Resources: 3/14/13, 3/20/13 [DP].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Allows the owner of commercial crops to receive compensation for damage caused to the crops by bighorn sheep.
- Directs the Department of Fish and Wildlife to pay crop damage compensation claims in the order they were received, even if the incident occurred in a previous biennium.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Blake, Chair; Chandler, Ranking Minority Member; MacEwen, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Buys, Dunshee, Haigh, Hurst, Kretz, Orcutt, Pettigrew, Schmick, Stanford and Warnick.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Lytton, Vice Chair.

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is directed to, subject to funding limits, monetarily compensate the owners of commercial crops damaged by deer or elk and the owners of commercial livestock that are killed or significantly injured by bears, cougars, or wolves. Each individual claim by a crop or livestock owner is eligible to be paid the value of the lost crop less any payments received by a nonprofit organization up to a maximum of \$10,000.

Total compensation for the owners of commercial crops generally may not exceed \$150,000 per year, and total compensation for the owners of commercial livestock may not exceed the amounts specifically appropriated for the purpose.

The minimum loss must be set to at least \$500.

Property owners may not receive compensation from the WDFW if they have insurance that provides compensation for the crop loss. Also, they must first exhaust any available compensation offers from nonprofit organizations and utilize all applicable legal and practicable self-help preventative measures. Self-help measures include nonlethal methods of damage prevention and materials and services provided by the WDFW.

Summary of Bill:

In addition to deer and elk damage, the owners of commercial crops may receive compensation from the WDFW for damage done to crops by bighorn sheep. Compensation limits and rules that apply to crop damage done by deer and elk also apply to bighorn sheep damage.

For all crop damage, regardless of source, the WDFW must maintain a discreet list of claims that have been approved but not yet paid. Payment must be made on those claims in the chronological order that they were received by the WDFW regardless if they were received in the current fiscal biennium. All claim payments are conditional on funding being available. A claim's appearance on the list is not a guarantee of payment.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) None.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: None.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.