

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SHB 1323

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As of March 22, 2013

**Title:** An act relating to the sea cucumber dive fishery.

**Brief Description:** Regarding the sea cucumber dive fishery.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Representatives Lytton, Morris, Blake and Takko).

**Brief History:** Passed House: 3/06/13, 91-4; 3/06/13, 77-20.

**Committee Activity:** Natural Resources & Parks: 3/21/13.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

**Staff:** Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

**Background:** The sea cucumber dive fishery (dive fishery) requires a license issued by the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW). The dive fishery is a limited-entry fishery, open since 2000 only to those renewing existing licenses. DFW also administers a statutory, industry-funded license buyback program (buyback program) for the dive fishery. The buyback program is currently authorized through 2013, or until the number of licenses is reduced to 20. There are currently 27 licenses remaining in the dive fishery.

Funding for the buyback program comes from the following industry-funded sources:

- surcharges on a dive fishery license renewal, designating an alternate operator on a dive fishery license, and transfers of a dive fishery license; and
- a portion of the enhanced food fish tax on commercial sea cucumber landings.

Under current law, any fund remaining after the buyback program has reached its statutory license reduction goal must be used for sea cucumber management and enforcement.

**Summary of Bill:** Authorization for the dive fishery buyback program and its funding mechanisms is extended for three additional years through 2016, unless the fishery reaches its statutory license reduction goals sooner.

Additionally, any surcharge funds, but not funds from the enhanced food fish tax, remaining in the program after the buyback program has reached its statutory license reduction goal

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must be divided equally among the existing license holders. Current law provides that any remaining money must be used by DFW for sea cucumber management and enforcement.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

[OFM requested ten-year cost projection pursuant to I-960.]

**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: This bill appropriately extends the sea cucumber fishery buyback program for an additional three years to help the industry reach its goal of reducing sea cucumber permits to 20 licenses. This move will help keep a sustainable and economically viable fishery.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative Lytton, prime sponsor; Rich Childers, DFW.