

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5760

As of February 20, 2013

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: Senator Parlette.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources & Parks: 2/19/13.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Staff: Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

Background: Commercial Crop Damage Compensation Generally. The Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) has the authority to pay up to \$150,000 per year for commercial crop damage caused by deer or elk. Of this total, \$120,000 is available from the Wildlife Account and \$30,000 from the state general fund. Compensation is generally capped at \$10,000 per claim.

In order to receive payments, the owner of damaged commercial crops must submit a claim to DFW. Eligibility criteria for these payments include that the owner:

- be involved in commercial agriculture, generally requiring an agricultural income of at least \$10,000 annually;
- meet conditions including having taken preventive measures to address the wildlife interaction; and
- not have insurance that covers the damage.

DFW may offer to provide assistance, including materials and services, to address damage caused by wildlife that is not eligible for compensation.

Summary of Bill: The commercial crop damage compensation program is expanded to include damage caused by bighorn sheep in addition to deer and elk.

Appropriation: None.

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.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 14, 2013.

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 will provide support to those farmers amassing damage to their crops by species other than elk and deer. Funding this program is key.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Tom Davis, WA Farm Bureau; Jack Field, WA Cattlemen's Assn.; David Ware, DFW.