

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SSB 5760

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As Passed Senate, February 28, 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:** Senate Committee on Natural Resources & Parks (originally sponsored by Senator Parlette).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Natural Resources & Parks: 2/19/13, 2/21/13 [DPS].  
Passed Senate: 2/28/13, 47-0.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5760 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Pearson, Chair; Smith, Vice Chair; Rolfes, Ranking Member; Hargrove, Hewitt, Kline and Parlette.

**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.

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*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.*

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

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

Additionally, DFW must maintain one list each for crop damage and livestock damage claims approved for payment. The lists must be organized chronologically based on the date the claim was received, and DFW must pay claims in order as funds become available. DFW must retain and pay claims across fiscal years and biennia.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill:** 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.