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SENATE BILL 6287

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State of Washington

63rd Legislature

2014 Regular Session

By Senators Dansel and Benton

Read first time 01/20/14. Referred to Committee on Natural Resources & Parks.

1 AN ACT Relating to a pilot program for cougar control; adding new  
2 sections to chapter 77.12 RCW; and providing expiration dates.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1)(a) The department, in cooperation and  
5 collaboration with the county legislative authorities of Ferry,  
6 Stevens, Pend Oreille, Chelan, Okanogan, and Klickitat counties, shall  
7 recommend rules to establish a five-year pilot program within select  
8 game management units of these counties, to pursue or kill cougars with  
9 the aid of dogs.

10 (b) Dangerous wildlife task teams must be developed in each county  
11 comprised of representatives from the county and the department. A  
12 pursuit season and a kill season with the aid of dogs must be  
13 established through the commission's rule-making process, utilizing  
14 local dangerous wildlife task teams. The dangerous wildlife task teams  
15 shall also develop a more effective and accurate dangerous wildlife  
16 reporting system to ensure a timely response.

17 (c) The pilot program's primary goals are to provide for public  
18 safety, to protect property, and to assess, conserve, and manage cougar  
19 populations.

1 (2) Rules adopted by the commission to establish a pilot project  
2 allowing for the pursuit or hunting of cougars with the aid of dogs  
3 under this section must ensure that all pursuits or hunts are:

4 (a) Designed to protect public safety or property;

5 (b) Reflective of the most current cougar population data;

6 (c) Designed to generate data that is necessary for the department  
7 to satisfy the reporting requirements of section 3 of this act; and

8 (d) Consistent with any applicable recommendations emerging from  
9 research on cougar population dynamics in a multiprey environment  
10 funded in whole or in part by the department.

11 (3) The department may authorize five seasons in which cougars may  
12 be pursued or killed with dogs, subject to the other conditions of the  
13 pilot program. The seasons are authorized to aid the department in the  
14 gathering of information necessary to formulate a recommendation to the  
15 legislature regarding whether a permanent program is warranted and, if  
16 so, what constraints, goals, and objectives should be included in a  
17 permanent program.

18 (4) This section expires July 1, 2019.

19 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) A county legislative authority may  
20 request inclusion in the pilot project authorized by section 1 of this  
21 act after taking the following actions:

22 (a) Adopting a resolution that requests inclusion in the pilot  
23 project;

24 (b) Documenting the need to participate in the pilot program by  
25 identifying the number of cougar/human encounters and livestock and pet  
26 depredations;

27 (c) Developing and agreeing to the implementation of an education  
28 program designed to disseminate to landowners and other citizens  
29 information about predator exclusion techniques and devices and other  
30 nonlethal methods of cougar management; and

31 (d) Demonstrating that existing cougar depredation permits, public  
32 safety cougar hunts, or other existing wildlife management tools have  
33 not been sufficient to deal with cougar incidents in the county.

34 (2) This section expires July 1, 2019.

35 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) By September 1, 2018, the department  
36 must deliver to the legislature, consistent with RCW 43.01.036, a

1 progress report summarizing the pilot program authorized in section 1  
2 of this act. The report must include information relating to how the  
3 program has been used to assess cougar population levels and protect  
4 public safety and property. The report may also include any  
5 recommendations as to how cougar management policies may be changed in  
6 the future to achieve more effective or efficient management.

7 (2) This section expires July 1, 2019.

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** Sections 1 through 3 of this act are each  
9 added to chapter 77.12 RCW.

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