
**Agriculture & Natural Resources
Committee**

HB 2446

Brief Description: Concerning the distinction among the roles of governmental employee participants and nongovernmental employee participants on work groups established by the director of the department of fish and wildlife.

Sponsors: Representatives Rossetti, Orcutt and Blake.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes the Director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) to appoint workgroups and taskforces or other formal processes to gather, process, and disseminate information in order to complete any of the Department's duties or responsibilities.
- Requires workgroups that include nongovernmental participants to be chaired by a nongovernmental participant and prohibits Department employees from serving as chair.

Hearing Date: 1/27/16

Staff: Rebecca Lewis (786-7339).

Background:

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) is responsible for the management of fish and wildlife and their habitats in the state. The Department also provides and regulates recreational and commercial fish- and wildlife-related opportunities which include hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing. The Department is governed by the Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) comprised of members appointed by the Governor. The Commission has final approval authority for international, interstate, and tribal agreements with the Department and for the Department's budget. The Commission also has the authority to adopt rules to implement the state's fish and wildlife laws.

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 and Commission have a number of duties and responsibilities, including:

- maximizing hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation opportunities compatible with healthy fish and wildlife populations;
- establishing hunting, fishing, and trapping seasons; and
- establishing provisions regulating food fish and shellfish.

An annual report must be submitted by the Department to the Governor on Department operations and statistics of the fishing industry. A biennial report is required to be submitted to the Legislature regarding the prior fiscal biennium. The biennial report includes descriptions of revenues, program costs, capital expenditures, new and ongoing research, ongoing litigation, and other issues related to the Department's duties.

The Department also has a variety of advisory groups that provide input on topics related to the Department's responsibilities. Advisory groups include:

- the Enforcement Advisory Committee;
- the Columbia River Coastal Steelhead Workgroup;
- the Master Hunter Advisory Group;
- the Elk Hoof Disease Technical Advisory Group; and
- the Wildlife Diversity Advisory Council.

Membership on advisory groups vary, but can include representatives of state, local, or tribal governments, constituent groups, or members of the public.

Summary of Bill:

The Director of the Department may appoint workgroups, task forces, subcommittees, or other formal processes in order to complete any duty or responsibility of the Department. Representatives from other state agencies or other levels of government, tribes, constituent groups, or citizens may be appointed to participate. Any workgroup, taskforce, or other process which includes the participation of nongovernmental individuals must be chaired by a nongovernmental individual unless specifically designated in statute. Employees of the Department may only provide staff support or participate in a capacity less than chair.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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