

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5356

As of January 30, 2015

Title: An act relating to a fishing line or monofilament recycling pilot program.

Brief Description: Concerning a fishing line or monofilament recycling pilot program.

Sponsors: Senators Mullet, Pearson and Hatfield.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources & Parks: 1/29/15.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Staff: Bonnie Kim (786-7316)

Background: Plastic and synthetic materials are the most common types of marine debris. Marine debris sources include litter, sewage, garbage, and fishing lines and nets. Most fishing line used today is monofilament, a single-strand, high-density nylon fishing line used on fishing reels and in fishing nets. Most monofilament is not biodegradable and can remain in the environment between 500 and 600 years.

Monofilament left in the environment may cause damage to boat propellers and harm birds and animals. Because monofilament is thin and often clear, it is difficult for birds and animals to see. Once animals become entangled, they may become injured or drown. Many animals also ingest fishing line.

Several states have voluntary monofilament recycling programs. These programs provide containers for monofilament recycling and educational materials about monofilament, collection, recycling, and program benefits. Through these programs, collected monofilament is reprocessed with other post-consumer materials such as milk cartons and soft drink bottles into fish habitat structures.

Summary of Bill: The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) must establish a pilot program to coordinate statewide volunteer efforts to recycle monofilament. WDFW must provide signage at each collection point and conduct community outreach, and may work with other state agencies and interested groups.

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.

WDFW must report to the Legislature by December 1, 2017, on collection point locations, community involvement and education, collection data, and a plan with estimated costs to establish a permanent program.

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: PRO: This bill engages the community to keep the fishing line out of regular garbage and properly recycled. The sport fishing industry supports this bill but has some concerns regarding implementation. The pilot program will start with 100 remote locations at docks, marinas, and other locations where people fish. The fiscal note relies heavily on volunteers. Wild animals are often entangled in fishing line and fishing nets. Discarded fishing line poses a serious threat to wildlife and the environment.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Mullet, prime sponsor; Carl Burke, Fish NW, NW Sportsfishing Assn., Puget Sound Anglers; Dayv Lowry, WDFW; John Huckabee, PAWS, DVM; Bonnie Anderson, Diane Weinstein, Barbara Justice, citizens.