
HOUSE BILL 1224

State of Washington

64th Legislature

2015 Regular Session

By Representatives Kretz and Short

Read first time 01/15/15. Referred to Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources.

1 AN ACT Relating to accelerating the rate of wolf recovery in
2 Washington; adding a new section to chapter 77.12 RCW; adding a new
3 section to chapter 43.21C RCW; and providing an expiration date.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 77.12
6 RCW to read as follows:

7 (1) The department must conduct a pilot project to explore active
8 wolf recovery options as an alternative to passive population
9 dispersal. The goal of the pilot project is to accelerate the
10 restoration of the wolf population in Washington to a self-sustaining
11 size with a geographic distribution that has a high probability of
12 persevering in the state into the future.

13 (2)(a) At a minimum, the pilot project required by this section
14 must explore the feasibility of translocating wolves from recovery
15 regions where population recovery has met or exceeded, or is
16 projected to meet or exceed, recovery objectives to recovery regions
17 where, as of the effective date of this section, the natural
18 dispersion of the species has not resulted in known and recognized
19 established wolf packs. To maximize the acceleration of wolf
20 recovery, the department must, when considering translocation sites,
21 give priority consideration to suitable habitat that is located the

1 furthest from any known and recognized wolf packs and the most
2 unlikely to be populated through the natural dispersion of the
3 species.

4 (b) For the purposes of this section, "recovery regions" means
5 those regions identified in the "Wolf Conservation and Management
6 Plan" adopted by the commission and dated December 2011.

7 (3) In implementing the pilot project required by this section,
8 the department must, at a minimum, conduct the following steps:

9 (a) Prepare a feasibility assessment for translocating wolves
10 into regions where the natural dispersion of the species has not
11 resulted in known and recognized established wolf packs. The
12 feasibility assessment must identify the portions of the receiving
13 region where there is an adequate amount and configuration of
14 suitable habitat and prey available to support successful breeding
15 pairs of wolves. The feasibility assessments must consider only state
16 and federal land and give priority to land that is forested and has
17 low densities of people and livestock;

18 (b) Develop an implementation plan to determine the best methods
19 for conducting a translocation, including the consideration of
20 appropriate genetic source material, release methods, and disease
21 testing protocols. The implementation plan must also identify a
22 process for seeking the approval of any federal agencies for the
23 translocation or translocations;

24 (c) Conduct any environmental reviews required under the national
25 environmental policy act or the endangered species act;

26 (d) Coordinate with other relevant federal and state agencies,
27 tribal governments, local governments, landowners, and
28 nongovernmental organizations;

29 (e) Conduct the actual translocation of live wolves consistent
30 with the implementation plan; and

31 (f) Conduct postrelease monitoring and evaluate the success of
32 the translocation or translocations in establishing successful
33 breeding pairs of wolves within the receiving recovery region.

34 (4) The department must complete the process of developing a
35 feasibility assessment no more than six months after the effective
36 date of this section. The subsequent steps required in subsection (3)
37 of this section must be planned and coordinated on a timeline that
38 has, as a goal, wolf translocations occurring by December 31, 2017.

39 (5)(a) The department must report to the legislature, consistent
40 with RCW 43.01.036, its progress in implementing this section:

- 1 (i) Annually by October 31st of each year;
- 2 (ii) Upon the completion of each required step of subsection (3)
- 3 of this section; and
- 4 (iii) Upon the identification of any issue that limits the
- 5 ability of the department to progress through the steps laid out in
- 6 subsection (3) of this section.
- 7 (b) In addition, the department must prepare a final report to
- 8 the legislature by October 31, 2018, that outlines lessons learned
- 9 about wolf recovery from the pilot project required by this section
- 10 and plans to continue or expand the wolf translocations. If, by
- 11 October 31, 2018, no wolves have been translocated, the final report
- 12 must detail all limitations and restrictions to translocations
- 13 identified by the pilot project and suggestions or plans to overcome
- 14 the limitations.
- 15 (6) This section expires June 30, 2019.

16 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.21C

17 RCW to read as follows:

18 The intrastate translocation of wolves by the department of fish

19 and wildlife is not subject to the requirements of RCW

20 43.21C.030(2)(c) when conducted for the purposes of recovering wolf

21 populations.

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