
Appropriations Committee

HB 2126

Brief Description: Creating a community-based approach to provide assistance with nonlethal management methods to reduce livestock depredations by wolves.

Sponsors: Representatives Blake and Wilcox.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates the Northeast Washington Wolf-Cattle Management Grant Program and Account (Account) within the Department of Agriculture to fund the employment of nonlethal wolf management strategies and tools.
- Creates an advisory board to advise the Director of the Department of Agriculture on the expenditure of funds in the Account.

Hearing Date: 2/24/17

Staff: Dan Jones (786-7118).

Background:

Wolf Management.

The gray wolf is classified as an endangered species for all of Washington under state law, and for the western two-thirds of Washington under federal law. A Wolf Conservation and Management Plan (Plan) was adopted by the Washington State Fish and Wildlife Commission in December 2011. The Plan guides recovery and management of gray wolves in Washington.

Conservation Districts.

Conservation Districts are governmental subdivisions that provide voluntary services related to conservation and agricultural practices. There are 45 Conservation Districts in Washington. Conservation District Boards consist of five members (three elected and two appointed), at least three of which must be landowners or farm operators.

Summary of Bill:

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 Northeast Washington Wolf-Cattle Management Grant (Grant) is created, administered by the Department of Agriculture (WSDA). Grant funds must be used for nonlethal deterrence resources, including equipment and tools.

An advisory board is created to advise the WSDA on the use of Grant funds and the use of resources funded by the Grants. The advisory board consists of one member each from the Ferry County, Stevens County, and Pend Oreille County Conservation District Boards. Advisory board members are appointed, in consultation with the relevant Conservation District and legislators, by the Director of the WSDA for two-year terms. Advisory board members must be knowledgeable about wolf depredation and nonlethal wolf management, and may not benefit financially from Grant-funded contracts.

The Northeast Washington Wolf-Cattle Management Account (Account) is created. Grant funds are deposited into the Account, and the Account may only be used to deploy nonlethal wolf deterrence resources. The Account is nonappropriated, and only the Director of the WSDA may authorize expenditures, in consultation with the advisory board. The advisory board may solicit public and private funds for the Grants.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 23, 2017.

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