
**Agriculture & Natural Resources
Committee**

2SSB 5474

Brief Description: Initiating proactive steps to address elk hoof disease.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senator Pearson).

Brief Summary of Second Substitute Bill

- Requires the Department of Fish and Wildlife to adopt rules prohibiting the translocation of elk from areas with elk affected by hoof disease.
- Requires, subject to appropriation, the Washington State University College of Veterinary Sciences to develop an elk hoof disease monitoring and assessment program.

Hearing Date: 3/15/17

Staff: Rebecca Lewis (786-7339).

Background:

Department of Fish and Wildlife Authority.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) is responsible for the management of the state's fish and wildlife resources. Among other duties, the agency must classify wildlife and establish rules and regulations governing the time, place, manner, and methods used to harvest or enjoy fish and wildlife. Specifically, this includes the authority to:

- regulate the transportation and possession of fish and wildlife in the state; and
- authorize the removal of wildlife that is destroying property, or when it is necessary for wildlife management or research.

Elk Hoof Disease in Washington.

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.

According to the DFW, reports of limping elk and elk with hoof deformities began in the 1990s in the Cowlitz River Basin. Since 2008, sightings increased to additional areas of southwest Washington, including in the areas of both the Mount St. Helens and Willapa Hills elk herds. In late 2015, evidence of elk hoof disease was detected in Skagit County.

Summary of Bill:

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) must adopt rules prohibiting any person, including DFW staff, from translocating live elk from an area affected by hoof disease to any other location unless that translocation is consistent with a process developed by the DFW for translocation for monitoring or hoof disease management purposes.

The Washington State University College of Veterinary Medicine (College) is designated as the state lead in developing a program for the monitoring and assessment of causes and potential solutions for elk hoof disease. To carry out this mission, the College must establish an elk monitoring program in southwest Washington, and must work collaboratively with other entities including the DFW, the state veterinarian, and any tribes with an interest in participating. The College must provide updates on its findings, program needs, and any recommendations on at least an annual basis to the appropriate committees of the Legislature and the Fish and Wildlife Commission.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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