
**Agriculture & Natural Resources
Committee**

ESSB 6127

Brief Description: Improving the management of the state's halibut fishery.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks (originally sponsored by Senator Van De Wege).

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Establishes a \$5 fee for a halibut catch record card.

Hearing Date: 2/14/18

Staff: Rebecca Lewis (786-7339).

Background:

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) is responsible for the management of the state's fish and wildlife resources, and establishes basic rules and regulations governing the time, place, manner, and methods used to harvest or enjoy fish and wildlife. As a part of this responsibility, the DFW issues licenses, tags, endorsements, and permits for hunting and fishing in Washington. Most revenue from licenses, tags, and endorsements is directed either to the Wildlife Account or one of several enhancement accounts.

Halibut seasons are set through an annual process conducted at the international, federal, and state level. The International Pacific Halibut Commission sets harvest limits for all regulatory areas, which are shared under a plan developed by the Pacific Fishery Management Council and implemented through federal and state rules. The DFW solicits public input into the season setting process and conducts fishery monitoring and enforcement activities.

By rule, DFW requires catch reporting on halibut, salmon, steelhead, sturgeon, and Puget Sound crab. In most cases, there is no charge for the first catch record card. Subsequent catch record

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cards cost \$11 each. There is a statutory fee of \$7.50 for a catch record card endorsed for Puget Sound crab when purchased with a combination fishing license.

Summary of Bill:

A fee of \$5 per card is established for the halibut catch record card. Funds from the halibut catch record cards must be used for monitoring, management, and expansion of recreational halibut fishery opportunities.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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