

FINAL BILL REPORT

2SSB 5474

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Synopsis as Enacted

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

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

Senate Committee on Natural Resources & Parks
Senate Committee on Ways & Means
House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources
House Committee on Appropriations

Background: Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) Wildlife Management Authority in General. DFW serves as manager of the state's fish and wildlife resources. Among other duties, the agency must classify wildlife and establish the basic 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. According to DFW, reports of limping elk and elk with hoof deformities began in the 1990s in the Cowlitz River Basin. Since 2008, sighting increased to additional areas of southwest Washington, affecting both the Mount St. Helens and Willapa Hills elk herds. In late 2015, evidence of elk hoof disease was detected in Skagit County.

Summary: Limits Translocation of Elk in Areas with Hoof Disease. DFW's general statutory authority to authorize the transportation of fish and wildlife is amended to prohibit DFW from allowing any person, including DFW staff, from translocating a live elk out of an area with elk affected by hoof disease. However, DFW may allow translocation:

- consistent with a process developed by DFW with input from the affected federally recognized tribes for monitoring or hoof disease management purposes; or
- within an elk herd management plan area affected by hoof disease.

Establishes an Elk Hoof Disease Monitoring Program. Subject to appropriation, the Washington State University College of Veterinary Medicine (College) must develop a program to:

- monitor and assess causes of and potential solutions for elk hoof disease; and

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- establish an elk monitoring system in southwest Washington.

In doing so, the College must work collaboratively with groups including DFW, the state Veterinarian, and tribes interested in participating. Additionally, the College must provide updates to the Legislature at least annually.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	49	0	
House	98	0	(House amended)
Senate	49	0	(Senate concurred)

Effective: July 23, 2017