

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6315

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As of January 23, 2018

**Title:** An act relating to notification of wildlife transfer, relocation, or introduction into a new location.

**Brief Description:** Concerning notification of wildlife transfer, relocation, or introduction into a new location.

**Sponsors:** Senator Wagoner.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks: 1/22/18.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Requires the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) to provide notice and hold a public hearing prior to the transfer, relocation, or introduction of wildlife into a different location in the state.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, WATER, NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

**Staff:** Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

**Background:** 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.

**Summary of Bill:** DFW must hold a public hearing before agency personnel may transfer, relocate, or introduce any wildlife into a new location in the state. The meeting must occur in the community likely to be impacted by the relocation. Members of the public may not be required to register their names or other information as a condition of attendance. The

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presiding official or DFW staff must present the details of the proposed action and potential impacts, and the public must be afforded the opportunity to comment.

Public notice of the meeting must be provided at least 30 days prior to the date of the meeting and must state the date, time, and location of the public hearing and a brief summary of the proposed action. The summary must include:

- the species of wildlife to be introduced, transferred, or relocated;
- the estimated number of animals;
- the general location where the wildlife will be released; and
- the potential range where the wildlife is likely to roam.

A process is provided for distribution of public notice of the meeting. Exemptions from this process are provided for certain wildlife management actions, including hatchery programs, and removing an animal from an urban or residential area to an area where the same species reside.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 16, 2018.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: This bill allows a direct process for input from locals who may be impacted. It is not aimed at changing any particular outcome. Sometimes locals are the last to know or have the opportunity for input. A public process is important before wildlife are transferred, before things like the elk transfer into the Skagit area in the 2000s. It is important to listen to those in the areas that could be impacted, as they can often spot potential problems on the ground.

CON: There is nothing wrong with public input, but wildlife management is a science and should be left in the hands of qualified professionals.

OTHER: DFW is committed to transparency. The agency is willing to implement any input process passed by the Legislature, and have some suggestions to focus on the key issues identified by stakeholders.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Keith Wagoner, Prime Sponsor; Randy Good, Friends of Skagit County, CAPR Skagit Chapter, Skagit County Cattlemen's; Tom Davis, Washington Farm Bureau.

CON: Peggen Frank, Stillaguamish Tribe.

OTHER: Eric Gardner, Department of Fish and Wildlife.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.