

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1917

As Passed House:
March 12, 2019

Title: An act relating to the use of certain animal traps by airport operators.

Brief Description: Concerning the use of certain animal traps by airport operators.

Sponsors: House Committee on Rural Development, Agriculture, & Natural Resources
(originally sponsored by Representatives Peterson and Dent).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Rural Development, Agriculture, & Natural Resources: 2/19/19, 2/22/19 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/12/19, 92-4.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Creates an exemption from the prohibition on the use of body-gripping animal traps for airport operators to trap animals under certain conditions.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT, AGRICULTURE, & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Blake, Chair; Shewmake, Vice Chair; Dent, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chapman, Dye, Fitzgibbon, Kretz, Lekanoff, Orcutt, Pettigrew, Ramos, Schmick, Springer and Walsh.

Staff: Rebecca Lewis (786-7339).

Background:

Use of Body-Gripping Animal Traps.

Initiative Measure No. 713 (I-713), passed in 2000, made it a gross misdemeanor to use any body-gripping trap to capture any mammal, or to use a leghold trap, neck snare, or other

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body-gripping trap to capture a mammal for recreation or commerce. The Director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife may grant permits to use certain traps in limited circumstances including protection of public health and safety, protection of threatened or endangered species, and wildlife research.

Airport Operators.

An airport operator is defined in statute as any municipality, including a city, town, airport district, or port district of the state, or state agency that owns or operates an airport.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

A new exemption from the prohibition on body-gripping animal traps is added to allow airport operators, under a special permit from the Director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife (Director), to trap an animal to protect human and aviation security. The airport operator must obtain a permit from the Director every three years, and must annually report the previous year's trapping activity to the Director. Airport operators are still subject to the prohibition on selling, trading, or exchanging fur of any mammal.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This is a very common sense bill. Airports around the state use traps to ensure animals do not run across the runways. In order to do this, airports must apply for trapping permits monthly with the Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department), and this bill provides an opportunity to renew permits every five years instead. The sponsor of the bill is also a board member of PAWS Wildlife Center and does a lot of animal rehabilitation work in cooperation with the Department. After the initiative passed, there was an effort to amend it to include this exemption. Ever since, the airports have completed the monthly requests with the Department and to date none have been denied. The Department supports the concept of this bill and appreciates the onerous nature of its special trapping permit process. The Department would prefer permits to be renewed more frequently than every five years, and is working with the sponsor on an appropriate approach. It would make sense to require permits to be renewed every year to coincide with the annual review.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Peterson, prime sponsor; Dan Brinson, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife; and Susie Tract, Washington Airport Management Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.