
**Rural Development, Agriculture &
Natural Resources Committee**

SSB 5613

Brief Description: Concerning the use of dogs to hunt black bear, cougar, or bobcat.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks (originally sponsored by Senators Van De Wege, Rolfes, Conway, Hasegawa, Liias, Lovelett, Pedersen and Stanford).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Removes the exemption allowing an employee or agents of a county to hunt black bear, cougar, or bobcat with the aid of a dog.
- Provides that the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife may authorize an employee or agents of a county agency to conduct a cougar public safety response with the aid of a dog or dogs.

Hearing Date: 2/16/22

Staff: Rebecca Lewis (786-7339).

Background:

Generally, the Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) may authorize the removal or killing of wildlife that is destroying or injuring property, or when necessary for wildlife management or research. In 1996 the passage of Initiative Measure No. 655 prohibited, with certain exemptions, the hunting of black bears, cougars, bobcats, or lynx with the use of dogs. One of the exemptions allows for employees or agents of a county, state, or federal agency, while acting in their official capacity, to hunt black bears, cougars, bobcats, or lynx with the use of dogs in order to protect livestock, domestic animals, private property, or the public safety. Other exemptions

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allow for the pursuit, relocation, or capture for scientific purposes; or the hunting of black bears, cougars, or bobcats in order to protect endangered species.

Summary of Bill:

The exemption authorizing an employee or agent of a county to hunt black bear, cougar, or bobcat with the aid of a dog for the purpose of protecting livestock, domestic animals, private property, or the public safety is removed. Instead, an employee or agents of a county agency may conduct a cougar public safety response with the aid of a dog or dogs with authorization from the WDFW.

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.