

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1649

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks, February 24, 2022

Title: An act relating to the advisory committee on hunters and fishers with disabilities.

Brief Description: Concerning the advisory committee on hunters and fishers with disabilities.

Sponsors: House Committee on Rural Development, Agriculture & Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Representatives Shewmake and Taylor; by request of Department of Fish and Wildlife).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/2/22, 96-0.

Committee Activity: Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks: 2/22/22, 2/24/22 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes that the Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) may appoint up to two additional members who meet certain criteria to the Advisory Committee on Hunters and Fishers with Disabilities (Advisory Committee).
- Changes the content and frequency of the report the Commission must submit to the Legislature about the Advisory Committee.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, WATER, NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Van De Wege, Chair; Salomon, Vice Chair; Warnick, Ranking Member; Honeyford, Rolfes, Short and Stanford.

Staff: Karen Epps (786-7424)

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Background: The Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) consists of nine members serving six-year terms. The Legislature provided the Commission with broad policy and rulemaking authority for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW).

DFW and the Commission are authorized to regulate state fish and wildlife resources and issue licenses for fishing and hunting activities, while also attempting to maximize the public recreational hunting and fishing opportunities for all citizens regardless of age or ability. DFW also manages nearly 1 million acres of public land for fish and wildlife, habitat conservation, and wildlife-oriented recreation.

The Advisory Committee on Hunters and Fishers with Disabilities (Advisory Committee), also referred to as the Americans with Disabilities Act Advisory Committee, was created by the Legislature as a pilot program in 2001 and made permanent in 2008. The Advisory Committee is composed of seven volunteer members, each an individual with a disability, representing one of DFW's six administrative regions and one at-large member.

At least once every four years, the Commission must provide a report to the appropriate legislative committees on the effectiveness of the Advisory Committee, including participation levels, general interest, quality of advice, and recommendations about the Advisory Committee's modification or continuance. The most recent report was completed in 2019 and the next report is due in 2023.

Summary of Bill: The Commission may appoint up to two additional Committee members who have demonstrable experience working with disabled persons in a natural resource environment.

The requirement that the Commission report to the Legislature on the effectiveness of the Advisory Committee is changed. The Commission must report to the Legislature at least every two years, by December 1. The report must be concise and detail the levels of participation in hunting and fishing by persons with disabilities and recommendations to maintain accessibility for persons with disabilities. The requirement that the report cover general interest, quality of advice, and recommendations about the Advisory Committee's modification or continuance is removed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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 makes two changes, including the

ability to add up to two committee members and changes to the language that lists certain types of disabilities. The addition of up to two members who are care givers and who have experience with persons with disabilities in natural resources settings will bring additional expertise to the committee. The change to the language was suggested by current committee members, so the bill strikes those examples. Additionally, the bill makes the reporting requirement more frequent and also more concise.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Tom McBride, WDFW.

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