

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1699

As Reported by House Committee On:

Agriculture and Natural Resources

Title: An act relating to establishing salaries for the Washington fish and wildlife commission.

Brief Description: Concerning establishing salaries for the Washington fish and wildlife commission.

Sponsors: Representatives Kretz, Chapman, Lekanoff, Schmick, Springer, Dent and Morgan.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture and Natural Resources: 2/10/23, 2/15/23 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Replaces the current method of compensation for Fish and Wildlife Commissioners with an annual salary established by the Governor in accordance with recommendations from the Office of Financial Management.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Chapman, Chair; Morgan, Vice Chair; Reeves, Vice Chair; Dent, Ranking Minority Member; Kloba, Kretz, Lekanoff, Orcutt, Schmick and Springer.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Chandler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member.

Staff: Rebecca Lewis (786-7339).

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:

Fish and Wildlife Commission.

The Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) is composed of nine members appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. Each even-numbered year, three Commissioners are appointed for six-year terms. Three members of the Commission must reside in Eastern Washington, three in Western Washington, and the remaining three members are appointed at-large. No two members may reside in the same county. If a vacancy occurs on the Commission before the end of the Commissioner's term, the Governor must appoint a successor within 60 days to complete the term.

The Commission operates under a statutory mandate to preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage Washington's wildlife, food fish, game fish, and shellfish. The Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) has been delegated the responsibility to carry out this mandate at the direction of the Commission.

Commissioners are eligible to receive compensation of up to \$100 per day during which the Commissioner attends an official Commission meeting or performs statutorily prescribed duties, as long as the Commissioner does not occupy a full-time position in any agency of the federal government, state government, or local government in Washington and receives any compensation from such government for working that day. Additionally, Commissioners are eligible for reimbursement for travel expenses incurred while engaged in official business away from their usual place of residence.

Salaried Boards and Commissions.

Directors of several departments and members of certain boards and commissions who are subject to appointment by the Governor receive salaries that are established by the Governor. Examples of boards and commissions whose salaries are set by the Governor include the Horse Racing Commission, the Public Disclosure Commission, and the State Conservation Commission. Governor-established salaries for these boards and commissions may not exceed recommendations by the Office of Financial Management (OFM). The OFM must report its salary recommendations to the Governor at least once in each fiscal biennium, but not later than 75 days prior to each regular legislative session during an odd-numbered year.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The provision is removed that allows Fish and Wildlife Commissioners receive compensation of up to \$100 per day during which the Commissioner attends an official Commission meeting or performs statutorily prescribed duties, as long as the Commissioner does not occupy a full-time position in any agency of the federal government, state government, or local government in Washington and receives any compensation from such government for working that day. Instead, the Governor must establish an annual salary for

members of the Commission in accordance with recommendations from the Office of Financial Management. Commissioners are still eligible for reimbursement for travel expenses incurred while engaged in official business away from their usual place of residence.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

Instead of the Citizens' Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials, the Governor with advice from the Office of Financial Management must establish an annual salary for Fish and Wildlife Commission members.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available. New fiscal note requested on February 15, 2023.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on July 1, 2023.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) has a very important job that requires long hours and research to prepare for meetings and make increasingly more complex decisions affecting fish and wildlife policy in the state. The most dedicated Commissioners work more than full-time hours. Many people who would like to serve on the Commission cannot for financial reasons, and the prime sponsor's goal is to expand the field of applicants for Commission positions. This is a first attempt at this concept, and may require some adjustments. The lack of a salary is an equity barrier, and there is a lack of diversity on the current Commission. All current members are white and only one is not retired.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) The Constitution established a specific directive for the State Citizens' Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials, which does not include establishing salaries for the Fish and Wildlife Commission.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Joel Kretz, prime sponsor; and Samantha Bruegger, Washington Wildlife First.

(Other) Teri Wright, Citizens' Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.