

FINAL BILL REPORT

HB 1876

C 48 L 24
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning confidential fisheries information collected by other states and maintaining that confidentiality under the public records act.

Sponsors: Representatives Springer, McEntire, Reeves and Thai; by request of Department of Fish and Wildlife.

House Committee on State Government & Tribal Relations
Senate Committee on State Government & Elections

Background:

The Public Records Act (PRA) requires state and local agencies to make their written records available to the public for inspection and copying upon request, unless the information fits into one of the various specific exemptions in the PRA or is otherwise provided in law. The stated policy of the PRA favors disclosure and requires narrow application of the listed exemptions.

The PRA exempts from public disclosure certain sensitive fish and wildlife data that are collected and shared by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) for research and management purposes. Sensitive fish and wildlife data generally include location data or nesting sites of endangered or threatened wildlife as designated by the Fish and Wildlife Commission or the WDFW, or other location data that could compromise the viability of a certain fish or wildlife population. Sensitive fish and wildlife data do not include reported predatory wildlife interactions. Release of sensitive fish and wildlife data is subject to a confidentiality agreement, except for the release of sensitive fish and wildlife data to the owner, lessee, or right-of-way or easement holder of private land who initially provided the data.

The PRA also exempts from public disclosure commercial fishing catch data from logbooks provided to the WDFW when the data identify specific catch location, timing, or methodology, and the release of the data would result in unfair competitive disadvantage to

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the commercial fisher providing the data. These data may be released to government agencies involved with the management of fish and wildlife resources.

Summary:

Fishery-related information that is collected by another state and is regarded as confidential under the laws of that state is exempt from public disclosure under the Public Records Act.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	86	11
Senate	48	0

Effective: June 6, 2024
June 30, 2027 (Section 3)