
SENATE BILL 5482

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By Senators Lias and Chapman

1 AN ACT Relating to the use of dogs to hunt black bear, cougar, or
2 bobcat; and amending RCW 77.15.245.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 **Sec. 1.** RCW 77.15.245 and 2019 c 226 s 2 are each amended to
5 read as follows:

6 (1) Notwithstanding the provisions of RCW 77.12.240, 77.36.030,
7 or any other provisions of law, it is unlawful to take, hunt, or
8 attract black bear with the aid of bait.

9 (a) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prohibit the
10 killing of black bear with the aid of bait by employees or agents of
11 county, state, or federal agencies while acting in their official
12 capacities for the purpose of protecting livestock, domestic animals,
13 private property, or the public safety.

14 (b) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prevent the
15 establishment and operation of feeding stations for black bear in
16 order to prevent damage to commercial timberland.

17 (c) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prohibit the
18 director from issuing a permit or memorandum of understanding to a
19 public agency, university, or scientific or educational institution
20 for the use of bait to attract black bear for scientific purposes.

1 (d) As used in this subsection, "bait" means a substance placed,
2 exposed, deposited, distributed, scattered, or otherwise used for the
3 purpose of attracting black bears to an area where one or more
4 persons hunt or intend to hunt them.

5 (2) Notwithstanding RCW 77.12.240, 77.36.030, or any other
6 provisions of law, it is unlawful to hunt or pursue black bear,
7 cougar, or bobcat with the aid of a dog or dogs.

8 (a) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prohibit the
9 hunting of black bear, cougar, or bobcat with the aid of a dog or
10 dogs by employees or agents of (~~county~~) state(~~(7)~~) or federal
11 agencies while acting in their official capacities for the purpose of
12 protecting livestock, domestic animals, private property, or the
13 public safety. A dog or dogs may be used by the owner or tenant of
14 real property consistent with a permit issued and conditioned by the
15 director. Nothing in this section prevents an employee or agents of a
16 county agency while acting in their official capacities for the
17 purpose of protecting livestock, domestic animals, private property,
18 or the public safety from assisting state or federal officials with a
19 cougar public safety response with the aid of a dog or dogs if the
20 department authorizes such assistance.

21 (b) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prohibit the
22 director from issuing a permit or memorandum of understanding to a
23 public agency, university, or scientific or educational institution
24 for the use of a dog or dogs for the pursuit, capture and relocation,
25 of black bear, cougar, or bobcat for scientific purposes.

26 (c) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prohibit the
27 director from issuing a permit or memorandum of understanding to a
28 public agency, university, or scientific or educational institution
29 for the use of a dog or dogs for the killing of black bear, cougar,
30 or bobcat, for the protection of a state and/or federally listed
31 threatened or endangered species.

32 (d) Nothing in this subsection may be construed to prohibit
33 nonlethal pursuit training of dogs by persons selected through the
34 process established in RCW 77.12.077 for future use for the purpose
35 of protecting livestock, domestic animals, private property, or the
36 public safety.

37 (3) Notwithstanding subsection (2) of this section, the
38 commission may authorize the use of dogs only in selected areas
39 within a game management unit to address a public safety need
40 presented by one or more cougar. This authority may only be exercised

1 after the commission has determined that no other practical
2 alternative to the use of dogs exists, and after the commission has
3 adopted rules describing the conditions in which dogs may be used.
4 Conditions that may warrant the use of dogs within a game management
5 unit include, but are not limited to, confirmed cougar/human safety
6 incidents, confirmed cougar/livestock and cougar/pet depredations,
7 and the number of cougar capture attempts and relocations.

8 (4) A person who violates subsection (1) or (2) of this section
9 is guilty of a gross misdemeanor. In addition to appropriate criminal
10 penalties, the department shall revoke the hunting license of a
11 person who violates subsection (1) or (2) of this section and order
12 the suspension of wildlife hunting privileges for a period of five
13 years following the revocation. Following a subsequent violation of
14 subsection (1) or (2) of this section by the same person, a hunting
15 license shall not be issued to the person at any time.

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