

2055-S

Sponsor(s): House Committee on State Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Hansen, Fuhrman, King, Basich, R. Fisher, Sheldon, Ogden, Lemmon and Conway; by request of Governor Lowry)

Brief Description: Creating the department of fish and wildlife.

HB 2055-S.E - DIGEST

(DIGEST AS ENACTED)

Creates a department of fish and wildlife.

Transfers all powers, duties, and functions of the department of fisheries and the department of wildlife to the new department.

Renames the wildlife commission as the fish and wildlife commission.

Creates a new sport fishing program.

Requires the development of a public awareness program on the recreational fisheries enhancement.

Increases efforts to document predation on salmon and bottomfish.

Authorizes the adoption of rules regarding the harvest in the federal exclusive economic zone.

Develops legislation for a recreational fishing capital facilities improvement program.

Creates the recreational fisheries enhancement account.

Conforms existing statutory provisions to reflect the creation of the new department.

Makes an appropriation of five hundred thousand dollars to carry out the purposes of the act.

Repeals RCW 43.131.375 and 43.131.376.

VETO MESSAGE ON HB 2055-S

May 28, 1993

To the Honorable Speaker and Members,

The House of Representatives of the State of Washington

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning herewith, without my approval as to section 96, Engrossed Substitute House Bill No. 2055 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to the creation of the department of fish and wildlife;"

I congratulate the Legislature for passing Engrossed Substitute House Bill No. 2055. This bill, like other agency consolidation measures enacted this year, will have a major positive impact on how we organize work and serve the public in our state agencies. The merger of fisheries and wildlife functions will save money, result in more accountable and efficient management, and eliminate overlap and duplication of effort. By improving management, we will be better able to focus the combined resources of the two departments on protecting the valuable fish and wildlife resources and habitat of this state for future generations.

However, a portion of section 96 would limit the ability of the new agency to wisely manage the resource under the new recreational salmon and marine fisheries enhancement program. The second sentence in that section constrains the Department of Fisheries and the new combined department from making decisions that may adversely affect a particular interest group. While decisions adverse to any interest group are never the preferred choice of the department, responsible stewardship and wise use of the resource occasionally require difficult decisions. The Governor and the department must retain the authority to make those decisions.

In order to maintain the intent of the remainder of section 96, I am directing the department to implement new recreational fishing enhancement activities prescribed by this act in a manner that clearly differentiates these activities from existing salmon programs of the department.

With the exception of section 96, Engrossed Substitute House Bill No. 2055 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Mike Lowry
Governor