
SENATE BILL 5856

State of Washington

55th Legislature

1997 Regular Session

By Senators Kohl and Winsley

Read first time 02/17/97. Referred to Committee on Natural Resources & Parks.

1 AN ACT Relating to the humane trapping of animals; amending RCW
2 77.32.197; adding a new section to chapter 77.16 RCW; and creating a
3 new section.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that private property
6 owners and their tenants need to be able to deal with animals posing a
7 nuisance or causing damage to their property and acknowledges that
8 trapping the animals may be the most expedient means of addressing an
9 animal damage problem. The legislature further finds that the
10 department of fish and wildlife may also need to employ trapping
11 techniques to remove wildlife that is destroying or injuring property
12 or when necessary for wildlife management or research. However, with
13 regard to recreational trapping of animals or the trapping of animals
14 for commercial gain, the legislature finds that trappers should use the
15 most humane trapping methods possible. It is the intent of this
16 legislation to ensure that trappers do so.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 77.16 RCW
18 to read as follows:

1 (1)(a) In order to ensure that trapping is conducted as humanely as
2 possible, trappers licensed under chapter 77.32 RCW shall not use, set,
3 place, or maintain leghold traps, padded leghold traps, conibear traps,
4 other body-gripping traps, or snares. The commission shall adopt rules
5 to implement this section.

6 (b) For purposes of this section, "leghold trap" means a spring-
7 powered trap, featuring two jaws that clamp shut on an animal's leg
8 when the animal steps on a weight-sensitive trigger. These traps are
9 also known as and include: Steel-jawed traps, foothold traps, long-
10 spring traps, coilspring traps, underspring or jump traps, and guarded
11 or stop-loss traps.

12 (c) For the purposes of this section, "conibear" trap means any
13 conibear model trap or similar body-gripping trap or device, whether or
14 not enclosed in or comprising part of a box, tube, or other enclosing
15 device.

16 (d) This prohibition on the use of certain types of traps does not
17 include traps designed primarily to catch mice and rats.

18 (2) Subsection (1) of this section does not apply in any of the
19 following situations:

20 (a) If an owner or tenant is trapping an animal on the owner's
21 property and the owner or tenant is acting in compliance with RCW
22 77.36.030. The legislature encourages these persons to use humane
23 trapping methods when possible;

24 (b) If the department is trapping wildlife that is destroying or
25 injuring property or when the department finds such trapping necessary
26 for wildlife management or research pursuant to RCW 77.12.240. The
27 legislature encourages the department to use humane trapping methods
28 when possible; and

29 (c) If the department has solicited the assistance of a licensed
30 trapper to assist in accomplishing the purposes of (b) of this
31 subsection. Again the legislature encourages the choice of humane
32 trapping methods when possible.

33 **Sec. 3.** RCW 77.32.197 and 1987 c 506 s 82 are each amended to read
34 as follows:

35 Persons purchasing a state trapping license for the first time
36 shall present certification of completion of a course of instruction in
37 safe, humane, and proper trapping techniques or pass an examination to
38 establish that the applicant has the requisite knowledge.

1 The director shall establish a program for training persons in
2 trapping techniques and responsibilities, (~~including~~) emphasizing the
3 use of trapping devices designed to painlessly capture or instantly
4 kill. The program shall identify trapping methods that are in
5 compliance with section 2 of this act. The director shall cooperate
6 with national and state animal, humane, hunter education, and trapping
7 organizations in the development of a curriculum. Upon successful
8 completion of the course, trainees shall receive a trapper's training
9 certificate signed by an authorized instructor. This certificate is
10 evidence of compliance with this section.

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