

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## ESHB 1114

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation, March 26, 2009

**Title:** An act relating to hunters under the age of fourteen.

**Brief Description:** Regarding youth hunting privileges.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Representatives Blake, Orcutt, Green, Springer, Van De Wege, Rolfes, McCune, Simpson, Goodman, Warnick and Conway).

**Brief History:** Passed House: 3/10/09, 70-26.

**Committee Activity:** Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation: 3/25/09, 3/26/09 [DPA, DNP, w/oRec].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Jacobsen, Chair; Ranker, Vice Chair; Hargrove, Hatfield and Swecker.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Morton, Ranking Minority Member.

**Minority Report:** That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Stevens.

**Staff:** Karen Epps (786-7424)

**Background:** A recreational license issued by the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) is required to hunt for classified wildlife in Washington. When purchasing a hunting license, persons under the age of 18 must present certification of the completion of a course of instruction of at least ten hours in the safe handling of firearms, safety, conservation, and sportsmanship. Hunter education courses focus on the topics of firearms and outdoor safety, wildlife management, and hunter responsibility.

Prior to 1994 hunters under the age of 14 were required to be accompanied by a parent, guardian, safety instructor, or other approved adult when they were in possession of a firearm

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for the purposes of hunting or target practice. Currently, there is no minimum age requirement when purchasing a hunting license or for enrollment in a hunter's education course.

**Summary of Bill (Recommended Amendments):** All hunters under the age of 14 must be accompanied by a person over the age of 18 when hunting for wild birds and animals. The accompanying adult hunter must stay within a range that permits continual unaided visual and auditory communication. The accompanying adult must have completed a hunting training course, or not be required to complete a hunting training course because of the person's age. A hunter under the age of 14 is exempt from this requirement when hunting on land owned by an immediate family member. "Immediate family" means parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, brother, or sister. Additionally, a hunter under the age of 14 is exempt from this requirement when engaged in falconry. It is a civil natural resources infraction for a person under the age of 14 to hunt without an adult companion.

DFW must create and maintain a user-friendly website that shows major recreation areas that are also used for hunting. The website must also include a recommendation that anyone recreating during hunting season may want to wear some form of fluorescent orange clothing.

**EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION COMMITTEE (Recommended Amendments):** Removes the provision that the accompanying requirement applies on public land. Establishes an exemption from the accompanying requirement when a youth hunter is hunting on family-owned land. Exempts youth engaged in falconry from the requirement that the youth be accompanied when hunting for wild birds or wild animals. Requires the DFW to create and maintain a user-friendly website that includes the recommendation that anyone recreating during hunting season may want to wear some form of fluorescent orange clothing.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Engrossed Substitute House Bill:** PRO: DFW supports this bill. Individual families have more of an impact on the youth hunter who is under the age of 14 and their hunting practices. If youth hunters start out hunting with a parent or other adult, they are not going to engage in separation during the hunt. Enforcement will use discretion when enforcing a law such as this. There have been various incidents involving juvenile hunters, including the incident in August 2008 in which the juvenile was the shooter. Approximately 7 percent of the hunting incidents identified by DFW since 1980 involved youth hunters under the age of 14.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Steve Crown, Mik Mikitik, DFW, Enforcement.