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**Agriculture & Natural Resources  
Committee**

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**ESB 5661**

**Brief Description:** Regarding derelict fishing gear.

**Sponsors:** Senators Nelson, Pridemore, Swecker, White, Morton and Fain.

**Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill**

- Changes, for commercial fishing nets only, the nature of the action that is expected of lost or abandoned gear from an encouragement to report the lost gear within 48 hours to a requirement that the loss be reported within 24 hours.
- Removes some gear from being encouraged to be reported.

**Hearing Date:** 2/17/12

**Staff:** Jason Callahan (786-7117).

**Background:**

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), in partnership with the Northwest Straits Commission and the Department of Natural Resources, must maintain a database of known derelict fishing gear and shellfish pots. Any person who loses or abandons commercial fishing gear or shellfish pots is encouraged to report the location of the loss and the type of gear lost to the WDFW within forty-eight hours of the loss. The WDFW also maintains guidelines for the safe removal and disposal of derelict fishing gear. Derelict gear can be removed from state waters without having to first obtain a hydraulic project approval from the WDFW if the removal guidelines are followed.

In statute, the definition of "derelict fishing gear" includes lost or abandoned fishing nets, fishing lines, and other commercial and recreational fishing equipment. The term does not include lost or abandoned vessels or shellfish pots.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Summary of Bill:**

A distinction is created among various types of derelict fishing gear. A person who loses or abandons shellfish pots is still only encouraged to report that loss to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW); however, a person who loses or abandons a commercial fishing net is required to report that loss to the WDFW within 24 hours of the loss. The reporting requirement only applies to commercial fishing nets. Other types of fishing gear, such as fishing lines, are no longer either encouraged or required to be reported to the WDFW.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.