
**Agriculture & Natural Resources
Committee**

HB 2143

Brief Description: Regarding genetically modified finfish.

Sponsors: Representatives Condotta, Pollet and Van De Wege.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Prohibits any person from producing genetically engineered finfish in state waters.
- Requires genetically engineered salmon or salmon products for wholesale or retail to be labeled.

Hearing Date: 1/17/14

Staff: Megan Mulvihill (786-7291) and Jason Callahan (786-7117)

Background:

Aquaculture in Washington

According to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), 10 million pounds of Atlantic salmon are produced annually by aquaculture in Washington, with the total economic value to the state estimated at over \$40 million. Aquaculture uses net pens, also referred to as floating sea cages, made of metal or plastic frames with net stretched between the frames to raise finfish for commercial use. These net pens are anchored in sheltered bays or inlets. Washington also has enhancement net pens for raising native salmon for conservancy efforts.

Environmental Management of Aquaculture

According to the Department of Ecology, commercial net pens are compatible with the natural marine environment if properly sited and operated. The WDFW has stated that the potential impacts from salmon escapes are competition, predation, disease transfer, hybridization, and

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colonization. The WDFW is authorized to regulate these net pens including inspections for disease and escapes, determining the appropriate species and stock numbers, and plans for capturing escaped fish.

Salmon Labeling Requirements

Labeling requirements for fresh, frozen, or processed salmon include identifying the species by its common name at the point of sale, and identifying whether the salmon or salmon products were farm-raised or commercially caught. This requirement does not apply to salmon that is minced, pulverized, coated with batter, or breaded. Violating this requirement constitutes misbranding and is punishable as a misdemeanor, gross misdemeanor, or felony, depending on the fair market value of the fish involved.

There is no federal or state requirement for genetically engineered foods to be labeled.

Summary of Bill:

Genetically engineered is defined as any organism or organisms in which the genetic material of the organism or organisms has been changed through the application of in vitro nucleic acid techniques or the direct injection of nucleic acid into cells or organelles of the organism or organisms.

No person may produce genetically engineered finfish in state waters. Violations of this prohibition may result in a gross misdemeanor, with each genetically engineered finfish counting as an individual violation.

Genetically engineered salmon or salmon products must be identified on the label of any fresh, frozen, or processed salmon for wholesale or retail. The genetically engineered labeling requirement applies to salmon that is minced, pulverized, coated with batter, or breaded. A violation may be enforced as a misbranding violation.

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.