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**SENATE BILL 5320**

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**State of Washington 66th Legislature 2019 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Takko, Rivers, Wilson, L., Van De Wege, Honeyford, Warnick, and Short

AN ACT Relating to establishing a nonlethal program within the department of fish and wildlife for the purpose of training dogs; amending RCW 77.15.245; and adding a new section to chapter 77.12 RCW.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 77.12 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The department shall adopt by rule a process and criteria to select persons who may act as agents of the state for the purpose of using one or more dogs to hunt or pursue black bear, cougar, or bobcat to protect livestock, domestic animals, private property, or the public safety. The department must establish by rule the requirements an applicant must comply with when applying for the program including, but not limited to, a criminal background check.

(2) The department shall administer a training program to enable persons who have been selected by the department pursuant to subsection (1) of this section to train dogs for use consistent with this section. The purpose of this program is to provide dog training opportunities using nonlethal pursuit.

**Sec.**  RCW 77.15.245 and 2005 c 107 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Notwithstanding the provisions of RCW 77.12.240, ((~~77.36.020,~~)) 77.36.030, or any other provisions of law, it is unlawful to take, hunt, or attract black bear with the aid of bait.

(a) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prohibit the killing of black bear with the aid of bait by employees or agents of county, state, or federal agencies while acting in their official capacities for the purpose of protecting livestock, domestic animals, private property, or the public safety.

(b) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prevent the establishment and operation of feeding stations for black bear in order to prevent damage to commercial timberland.

(c) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prohibit the director from issuing a permit or memorandum of understanding to a public agency, university, or scientific or educational institution for the use of bait to attract black bear for scientific purposes.

(d) As used in this subsection, "bait" means a substance placed, exposed, deposited, distributed, scattered, or otherwise used for the purpose of attracting black bears to an area where one or more persons hunt or intend to hunt them.

(2) Notwithstanding RCW 77.12.240, ((~~77.36.020,~~)) 77.36.030, or any other provisions of law, it is unlawful to hunt or pursue black bear, cougar, or bobcat((~~, or lynx~~)) with the aid of a dog or dogs.

(a) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prohibit the ((~~killing~~)) hunting of black bear, cougar, or bobcat((~~, or lynx~~)) with the aid of a dog or dogs by employees or agents of county, state, or federal agencies while acting in their official capacities for the purpose of protecting livestock, domestic animals, private property, or the public safety. A dog or dogs may be used by the owner or tenant of real property consistent with a permit issued and conditioned by the director.

(b) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prohibit the director from issuing a permit or memorandum of understanding to a public agency, university, or scientific or educational institution for the use of a dog or dogs for the pursuit, capture and relocation, of black bear, cougar, or bobcat((~~, or lynx~~)) for scientific purposes.

(c) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prohibit the director from issuing a permit or memorandum of understanding to a public agency, university, or scientific or educational institution for the use of a dog or dogs for the killing of black bear, cougar, or bobcat, for the protection of a state and/or federally listed threatened or endangered species.

(d) Nothing in this subsection may be construed to prohibit nonlethal pursuit training of dogs by persons selected pursuant to section 1 of this act for future use for the purpose of protecting livestock, domestic animals, private property, or the public safety.

(3)((~~(a)~~)) Notwithstanding subsection (2) of this section, the commission ((~~shall~~)) may authorize the use of dogs only in selected areas within a game management unit to address a public safety need presented by one or more cougar. This authority may only be exercised after the commission has determined that no other practical alternative to the use of dogs exists, and after the commission has adopted rules describing the conditions in which dogs may be used. Conditions that may warrant the use of dogs within a game management unit include, but are not limited to, confirmed cougar/human safety incidents, confirmed cougar/livestock and cougar/pet depredations, and the number of cougar capture attempts and relocations.

((~~(b) The department shall post on their internet web site the known details of all reported cougar/human, cougar/pet, or cougar/livestock interactions within ten days of receiving the report. The posted material must include, but is not limited to, the location and time of all reported sightings, and the known details of any cougar/livestock incidents.~~))

(4) A person who violates subsection (1) or (2) of this section is guilty of a gross misdemeanor. In addition to appropriate criminal penalties, the department shall revoke the hunting license of a person who violates subsection (1) or (2) of this section and order the suspension of wildlife hunting privileges for a period of five years following the revocation. Following a subsequent violation of subsection (1) or (2) of this section by the same person, a hunting license shall not be issued to the person at any time.

**--- END ---**