

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2395

As Reported By House Committee On:

Natural Resources

Title: An act relating to auctions and raffles authorized by the fish and wildlife commission.

Brief Description: Authorizing the fish and wildlife commission to conduct or authorize auctions and raffles for hunting of game animals and for wildlife-related recreation.

Sponsors: Representatives Stevens, Basich, Fuhrman, Hatfield and Mastin; by request of Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources: 1/17/96, 1/24/96 [DPS].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Fuhrman, Chairman; Buck, Vice Chairman; Basich, Ranking Minority Member; Regala, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Beeksma; Elliot; Hatfield; Jacobsen; Keiser; Sheldon; Stevens; L. Thomas and Thompson.

Staff: Linda Byers (786-7129).

Background: Under current law, the Fish and Wildlife Commission may authorize an auction for the hunting of certain trophy-quality animals from herds in areas not normally open to general public hunting. The Department of Fish and Wildlife may contract with an organization to sponsor the hunt. To date, the commission has contracted with the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep on two occasions to auction a permit to hunt bighorn sheep. The commission does not have the authority to authorize raffles for hunts.

The commission and the department director may enter into agreements with private entities regarding use of an entity's private property for wildlife-oriented purposes. Currently, there are two such wildlife management area agreements in place in the state.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Fish and Wildlife Commission may authorize the hunting of big game animals and wild turkeys through auction, and may authorize the hunting of up to 15 big game animals and wild turkeys per year through raffle. The director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife will establish the procedures for these hunts. In consultation with the Gambling Commission, the director may adopt rules regarding the raffle hunts. The raffles are not subject to the state's gambling laws.

The department may conduct an auction or raffle or may contract with a nonprofit wildlife conservation organization to conduct the auction or raffle. Any revenues retained by the wildlife organization after deducting its expenses for the auction or raffle must be used for wildlife conservation. The department's share of revenues from auctions and raffles will be deposited in the state Wildlife Fund and will be used to improve the habitat, health, and welfare of the species auctioned or raffled.

If a private entity has a private lands wildlife management area agreement with the department, the commission may authorize the private entity to conduct raffles for access to hunt for big game animals and wild turkeys on the property to meet conditions of the agreement. These raffle hunts under a private lands area agreement will not be counted toward the number of raffle hunts the commission may authorize.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill specifies that the department's share of funds raised through auctions and raffles will be deposited in the Wildlife Fund and used for the species auctioned or raffled. Also, raffle hunts conducted under a private lands wildlife management area agreement will not be counted toward the number of raffle hunts the commission may authorize.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: This will improve fairness to hunters and provide funding for the department. The department has talked with the Gambling Commission and hopes to adopt many of its rules and to learn from its experience. These special hunts will be in addition to generally available hunts. The department intends to go slow on this. This legislation is needed to implement one of the private lands agreements. We would prefer to offer raffles for access to hunt to our neighbors than go the auction route.

Testimony Against: The bill should indicate how the department will use these funds. We don't want this to end up being a "cash cow" for the agency. All citizens

should have opportunities to participate in hunting. We have concerns about how the department will ensure that a winner gets a trophy animal. We are concerned about which 15 animals the commission will choose.

Testified: Cyreis Schmitt, Department of Fish and Wildlife; Terry Hunt, Foundation for North American Wild Sheep; Tim Boyd, Washington Forest Protection Association; Jack Ward, Champion International Corporation (all in favor); Jim McAfee, Pierce County Sportsmen's Council; and Gerald Rowland, Modern Firearm Hunters of Washington (in favor with concerns).