

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6101

As Reported By House Committee On:
Natural Resources

Title: An act relating to food fish and shellfish license requirements.

Brief Description: Establishing a free shellfish digging weekend and including steelhead trout in the free fishing weekend.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Senators Drew, Strannigan, Spanel, Snyder, Bauer, Rasmussen, Roach and Oke).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources: 2/20/96, 2/21/96 [DP].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Fuhrman, Chairman; Buck, Vice Chairman; Pennington, Vice Chairman; Basich, Ranking Minority Member; Regala, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Beeksmas; Elliot; Hatfield; Jacobsen; Keiser; Sheldon; B. Thomas; L. Thomas and Thompson.

Staff: Rick Anderson (786-7114).

Background: Family fishing days are those days when a recreational fishing license is not required in order to fish for game fish, food fish, or shellfish. Current state law authorizes the Fish and Wildlife Commission to adopt rules establishing family fishing days for game fish, food fish, and shellfish. Many states have similar programs to encourage knowledge of the fishery and to increase family use of the resource.

A provision in Referendum 45 specifies that the commission, rather than the director, is to adopt rules regarding family fishing days for food fish. A two-thirds legislative vote is required to amend a referendum that has been approved by the voters in the past two years.

Summary of Bill: Catch record cards are not required during family fishing days. The commission is authorized to include steelhead in family fishing days. Family fishing days for food fish and shellfish are not required to be on the same day.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect July 1, 1996.

Testimony For: Having separate days for free shellfish, food fish, and game fish is a good idea. The department should do more to encourage family participation in fishing.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: John Kelly, King County Outdoor Sports Council; Rick Abbett, Trout Unlimited (both in favor); and Judith Freeman, Department of Fish and Wildlife.