

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6533

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 raffles for hunting of game animals.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Senators Owen, Oke, Bauer, Sutherland and Hochstatter; by request of Department of Fish and Wildlife).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources: 2/22/96 [DPA].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Fuhrman, Chairman; Buck, Vice Chairman; Pennington, Vice Chairman; Basich, Ranking Minority Member; Regala, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Elliot; Hatfield; Jacobsen; Sheldon; B. Thomas and Thompson.

Staff: Linda Byers (786-7129).

Background: Under current law, the Fish and Wildlife Commission may authorize auctions 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 the 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 Amended 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.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The amended bill allows the Fish and Wildlife Commission to authorize auctions and raffles and allows the commission to authorize raffles to implement a private lands wildlife management area agreement. The substitute bill provides only for the latter provision regarding the private lands wildlife management area agreements.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: The department supports the striking amendment. Champion International has made a major investment on its property for wildlife and needs the private lands portion of this bill in order to be able to conduct raffles.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Ed Manary, Department of Fish and Wildlife; and Tim Boyd, Washington Forest Protection Association (both in favor).