FINAL BILL REPORT

4SSB 5159

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Creating the warm water game fish enhancement program.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Owen, Oke, Haugen and Hochstatter).

Senate Committee on Natural Resources
Senate Committee on Ways & Means
House Committee on Natural Resources
House Committee on Appropriations

Background: The Department of Fish and Wildlife manages warm water game fish. Warm water fish species in Washington include: bass, catfish, crappie, perch, bluegill, walleye, pumpkinseed, sunfish and others. These fish do not receive a great deal of management emphasis from the department.

The creation of a warm water fish enhancement program would increase the fishing opportunities for warm water fish.

Summary: A warm water game fish enhancement program is created within the Department of Fish and Wildlife. A combined approach of habitat improvement and fish culture is utilized to improve warm water fish populations. The new program is funded by a warm water fish stamp with an annual fee of $5, which is required to fish for bass, channel catfish, walleye, crappie, and tiger musky. The warm water fish stamp takes effect January 1, 1997. A dedicated account is established in the state wildlife fund, subject to legislative appropriation. The revenue from the new surcharge cannot replace funding for warm water fish projects existing on December 31, 1994.

Funds from the warm water game fish account cannot be used for the operation or construction of the warm water fish culture project at Ringold. The Department of Fish and Wildlife must provide an operational and management plan to the Legislature for the Ringold warm water fish culture project by December, 1996.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	42	0	
House	95	0	(House amended)
Senate			(Senate refused to concur)
House	95	0	(House amended)
Senate	46	0	(Senate concurred)

Effective: June 6, 1996
July 1, 1996 (Sections 1, 2, 4-6)
January 1, 1997 (Section 3)