

SENATE BILL REPORT

4SSB 5159

As Passed Senate, February 13, 1996

Title: An act relating to a warm water game fish enhancement program.

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).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources: 1/24/95, 2/16/95 [DPS-WM]; 1/23/96, 2/1/96 [DP3S-WM].

Ways & Means: 2/22/95, 2/23/95 [DP2S]; 2/6/96 [DP4S].

Passed Senate, 3/13/95, 47-1; 2/13/96, 42-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: That Third Substitute Senate Bill No. 5159 be substituted therefor, and the third substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Drew, Chair; Spanel, Vice Chair; A. Anderson, Hargrove, Haugen, Morton, Oke, Owen, Strannigan and Swecker.

Staff: Ross Antipa (786-7413)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Fourth Substitute Senate Bill No. 5159 be substituted therefor, and the fourth substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Loveland, Vice Chair; Bauer, Cantu, Drew, Finkbeiner, Fraser, Hargrove, Hochstatter, Johnson, Kohl, Long, McDonald, Moyer, Pelz, Quigley, Roach, Sheldon, Snyder, Spanel, Strannigan, Sutherland, West, Winsley and Wojahn.

Staff: Cathy Baker (786-7708)

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 of Bill: 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 shall not replace funding for warm water fish projects existing on December 31, 1994.

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

\$200,000 is appropriated from the state general fund to the warm water game fish account so that the department can begin implementing the bill in July 1996. These funds must be repaid to the general fund after the warm water game fish surcharge has begun to be collected, but no later than June 30, 1997.

Appropriation: \$200,000 is appropriated from the general fund to the warm water game fish account.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 1996, except for fees which are effective January 1, 1997.

Testimony For (Natural Resources): The Department of Fish and Wildlife could increase the fishing opportunities for warm water fish with additional funding.

Testimony Against (Natural Resources): None.

Testified (Natural Resources): Judith Freeman, Department of Fish and Wildlife; Jim Owens, WA State Bass Federation.

Testimony For (Ways & Means): The bill will help enhance fishing opportunities, especially in eastern Washington. It will help alleviate fishing pressure on depressed marine stocks.

Testimony Against (Ways & Means): None.

Testified (Ways & Means): PRO: Ed Manary, Department of Fish and Wildlife; Jack Swanberg, NW Marine Trade Association; Barbara Lindsay, NW Sport Fishing Industry Association.

House Amendment(s): The \$200,000 general fund appropriation for early implementation is removed, as is the payback provision to the general fund. A null and void clause is added.