

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5355

As Passed Senate, March 7, 1995

Title: An act relating to claims for damages caused by deer or elk.

Brief Description: Providing for payment of claims for damages caused by deer or elk.

Sponsors: Senators Drew, Morton and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources: 2/2/95, 2/17/95 [DP].
Passed Senate, 3/7/95, 47-1.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass.

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

Staff: Vic Moon (786-7469)

Background: The state of Washington has traditionally paid claims to people whose property is damaged by state wildlife. These claims have varied from a few hundred dollars to many thousands of dollars. An Attorney General's Opinion in 1994 noted that the statute has been amended on several occasions and is unclear. A present \$2,000 limit on payments is in statute, yet it is not clear that the \$2,000 is an upper limit.

Because claims above a \$2,000 limit have been paid in the past, the Legislature needs to grant the state of Washington the authority to pay claims over \$2,000 in the interim period, while the claim proposals and the compensation issues are discussed by the Legislature.

Summary of Bill: Claims exceeding \$2,000 that have been filed under the Wildlife Code and have been presented to the Legislature may be paid after they are submitted to the state by the Risk Management Office.

The House and Senate Natural Resources Committees and the Department of Fish and Wildlife must study the issue of damages caused by wildlife and report to the Legislature by December 1, 1995.

The act expires on January 1, 1996.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: We need to solve the problem of wildlife damage claims. The Legislature needs to come up with new language and policies.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Dana Matthews, Department of Fish and Wildlife (pro).