

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5948

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Natural Resources, February 28, 1995

**Title:** An act relating to the authority of the state commission on fish and wildlife.

**Brief Description:** Clarifying the authority of the fish and wildlife commission.

**Sponsors:** Senators Drew, Gaspard, Oke, Owen, Haugen, McDonald, Rasmussen, Sutherland and Bauer.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Natural Resources: 2/23/95, 2/28/95 [DPS].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5948 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Drew, Chair; Haugen, Morton, Oke, Owen and Swecker.

**Staff:** Ross Antipa (786-7413)

**Background:** In 1994, the Department of Wildlife was merged with the Department of Fisheries. The Wildlife Commission became the Fish and Wildlife Commission and it was requested to review its responsibilities and to report to the Governor and the Legislature on any necessary changes.

The commission recommended increased responsibilities for itself.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** The Fish and Wildlife Commission establishes the overall goals, policies and objectives of the department. The director retains the authority to set rules for recreational and commercial harvest of food fish and shellfish.

The commission is authorized to conduct public hearings on the budget, and advise the director on budget matters. It also is encouraged to participate in the legislative process, and hires the commission staff. The Governor must choose the director from a list of at least three names submitted by the commission. The director approves department agreements, administers the department budget and the day-to-day management of the agency, but must comply with overall goals, policies and objectives set by the commission.

The commission sets the allocation policy for recreational and commercial fisheries.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The director is given more policy guidance from the commission, while the commission is involved in less day-to-day management of the agency. The commission is directed to perform more public involvement activities. The commissioners are limited to a maximum of two terms and the commission includes

representatives of recreational fishing, commercial fishing, environmental, hunting, and private landowner groups.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** The Wildlife Commission needs a larger role in the operation and policy setting for the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

**Testimony Against:** The Wildlife Commission should not have authority over commercial fisheries for food fish and shellfish.

**Testified:** Neal Houser, Glenn Ryan, WA Hunter Education Instructors Association; Gerald W. Rowland, President, Modern Firearm Hunters of WA; Vernon Young, Federation of Fly Fishers; Pete Soverel, Wild Salmon Center; Robert McLaughlin; Kurt Beardslee, Washington Trout; John Douglas WA Wildlife Federation; Bob Lake, Dave Ellison, Mark Ashley, Willapa Bay-Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force; Barbara Lindsay, Executive Director, Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association; Richard Good, WA Trollers Association; Frank Vrabeck, Trout Unlimited; Dawn Vyvyan, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission; Ed Owens.