

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESSB 6387

As Passed Senate, February 7, 1996

Title: An act relating to Puget Sound Dungeness crab licenses.

Brief Description: Concerning the holders of Puget Sound Dungeness crab fishing licenses.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Senators Spanel, A. Anderson, Snyder, Haugen, Roach and Kohl).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources: 1/18/96, 2/2/96 [DPS].
Passed Senate, 2/7/96, 48-1.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6387 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

Staff: Erika Lim (786-7488)

Background: The Puget Sound commercial Dungeness crab fishery is a limited-entry fishery administered by the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Summary of Bill: A number of changes affecting the Puget Sound commercial Dungeness crab fishery are made.

The Fish and Wildlife Commission may open the fishery from October 1 to April 15. If the commission closes or considers closing the fishery for any time between those dates, or if it does not open the fishery at all between those dates, it must hold a public hearing in the north Puget Sound area. The commission must consider certain factors if there may be a fishery closure. At least six commissioners must vote to close the fishery between October 1 and April 15, and the closure must be enacted in a way that permits fishers adequate time to remove their gear.

Between April 15 and October 1, the commission may not allow commercial crab fishing by any commercial fishers in Puget Sound recreational crabbing zones. The commission cannot require recreational crab pot escape rings larger than 4 1/8 inches.

Each license holder may use up to 100 pots. The 1000 pound landing requirement is repealed. A person who holds two licenses or two persons who each hold a license may fish from the same vessel.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The provisions of this bill are needed to ensure the viability of inner sound crabbers, particularly in light of last year's sudden closure of the season. It also will eventually reduce the size of the fleet and will ensure active participation by license holders.

Testimony Against: The department's ability to manage the resource would be severely limited.

Testified: Tom Barton, ISCA (pro); Ed Knudson, ISCA (pro); Gary Klein, Charterboat Assn. of Puget Sound (con); Ric Abbett, Trout Unlimited (con); Judith Freeman, WDFW; Alan Erickson, Puget Sound crab fisherman (pro); John Rantz, ISCA (pro); Joe Verdoes, ISCA (pro).