

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 2028

As Passed House

March 13, 1997

Title: An act relating to fish dealers' and sellers' licenses.

Brief Description: Establishing a fish seller's license.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Representatives Regala, Anderson, Doumit, Alexander, Cooper, Morris, Blalock and Costa).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources: 3/4/95, 3/5/97 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/13/97, 73-22.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Buck, Chairman; Sump, Vice Chairman; Thompson, Vice Chairman; Regala, Ranking Minority Member; Alexander; Anderson; Hatfield; Pennington and Sheldon.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Chandler.

Staff: Rick Anderson (786-7114).

Background: A food fish and shellfish tax is assessed to the person who has first legal possession of fish or shellfish when the possession is for commercial purposes. A person or entity in the business of selling, buying, or brokering fish or shellfish is required to have a wholesale fish dealer's license. The majority of licenses issued by the Department of Fish and Wildlife are issued to large and small fish processing or brokering businesses. Fishers who catch and sell their own fish or shellfish are also required to have a wholesale fish dealer's license if they sell fish to anyone other than a person with a wholesale fish dealer's license. The wholesale fish dealer's license fee is \$250. Persons holding this license must meet a number of reporting and financial assurance requirements to ensure compliance with the food fish and shellfish tax.

Summary of Bill: A fish seller's license is established. This license is required of a person who harvests and then sells the harvested fish to anyone other than a licensed wholesaler dealer. People holding a fish sellers licenses are subject to all taxes, reporting requirements, bonding requirements, and penalties as a person holding a wholesale fish dealer's license. The annual fee for this license is \$75.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This type of license existed before it was consolidated into a wholesale fish dealer's license sometime after 1983. The license fee at the time was \$37.50. The bill will provide a way for commercial fisherman to get greater value from their harvests. This is especially important given the low prices and low opportunity existing today. This bill will increase compliance with license requirements by making the annual fee more reasonable. The opportunity to buy fresh fish from the harvester will benefit both the fisher and the public. The bill needs some technical changes.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Dave Anderson, secondary sponsor; Scott Coughlin, Purse Seine Vessel Owners Association; Ed Owens, Coalition of Coastal Fisheries (all in favor); and Brian Edie, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (neutral).