
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 3012

State of Washington

55th Legislature

1998 Regular Session

By House Committee on Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Representatives Doumit, Buck, Regala, Schoesler, Linville, McCune, Tokuda, Pennington, Morris, Chandler, Anderson, Butler, Conway, Cole, Costa and Hatfield)

Read first time 02/05/98. Referred to Committee on .

1 AN ACT Relating to achieving greater compliance with laws
2 protecting fish and wildlife; adding a new section to chapter 75.08
3 RCW; creating new sections; and making an appropriation.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that there are a
6 number of laws already in existence to protect fish and wildlife in
7 this state. The legislature recognizes that in order to adequately
8 comply with mandates of the federal endangered species act (16 U.S.C.
9 Sec. 1531 et seq.), it is necessary to obtain greater compliance with
10 these laws. The legislature finds that the number of commissioned
11 officers who enforced fish and wildlife laws has decreased since the
12 merger of the department of wildlife and the department of fisheries.
13 The legislature finds that as a result of the state's increased
14 population the ratio of population to enforcement officers has
15 increased significantly. The legislature finds that visible
16 enforcement officers in the field act as an incentive for compliance
17 with laws that protect fish and wildlife. The legislature therefore
18 finds that additional fish and wildlife enforcement officers located in
19 the field are needed to protect the state's natural resources. It is

1 therefore the intent of the legislature to restore the number of
2 enforcement officers to the level prior to the merger of the department
3 of fisheries and the department of wildlife by directing the department
4 to deploy more enforcement officers into the field, authorizing the
5 establishment of a volunteer reserve corps of enforcement officers, and
6 providing funding to retain current and hire additional enforcement
7 officers.

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The director of the department of fish
9 and wildlife shall consult with the exclusive bargaining
10 representatives of employees of the department as well as
11 representatives of local communities for the purpose of preparing a
12 reorganization plan that results in the redeployment of staff from
13 central office positions to field enforcement positions. The
14 department shall also reallocate central office positions that become
15 vacant to field enforcement positions to the extent it is feasible.
16 The reorganization plan shall be prepared with the assistance of the
17 fish and wildlife commission with the objectives of improving the
18 overall efficiency of the department and providing greater protection
19 to fish and wildlife.

20 (2) The fish and wildlife commission shall report to the
21 appropriate legislative committees by December 31, 1998, to describe
22 the progress on the development of the redeployment plan.

23 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 75.08 RCW
24 to read as follows:

25 The department shall establish a reserve officer program for the
26 purpose of providing better enforcement of fish and wildlife laws. The
27 department shall determine the scope and line of authority for reserve
28 officers, but the authority may not exceed the authority of a
29 commissioned fisheries patrol officer under this chapter or a
30 commissioned wildlife agent under chapter 77.12 RCW. The criteria for
31 becoming a reserve officer shall include proper law enforcement
32 training and education approved by the Washington state criminal
33 justice training commission, and any other training deemed necessary by
34 the department. Any time spent as a reserve officer shall not increase
35 any eligibility for pension rights or benefits.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** The sum of one million nine hundred thousand
2 dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for
3 the fiscal year ending June 30, 1999, from the general fund to the
4 department of fish and wildlife for the sole purpose of hiring or
5 retaining fisheries patrol officers and wildlife agents to provide
6 better enforcement of the fish and wildlife laws with priority given to
7 areas where aquatic species have been listed or are proposed to be
8 listed under the federal endangered species act (16 U.S.C. Sec. 1531 et
9 seq.).

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