

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5165

As of February 3, 1999

Title: An act relating to the creation of fish and wildlife regional advisory councils.

Brief Description: Creating regional advisory councils to advise the fish and wildlife commission.

Sponsors: Senators T. Sheldon, Swecker, Hargrove, Rasmussen and Morton.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation: 2/8/99.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS & RECREATION

Staff: Victor Moon (786-7469)

Background: The Department of Fish and Wildlife is administered from headquarters in Olympia and from regional areas headquartered throughout the state. Since many fish and wildlife issues are regional in nature, advice from citizens within each region could provide the Washington State Fish and Wildlife Commission advice when they establish the policy that the department administers.

Summary of Bill: The Legislature acknowledges the challenge facing the Fish and Wildlife Commission and recognizes that within each region of the state there are people with an understanding of the fish and wildlife issues in that region who would be willing to assist the commission in its management functions. A fish and wildlife advisory council is established in each administrative region of the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The council is comprised of five members who are residents of the region, and who are knowledgeable about fish and wildlife issues. The county legislative authority in each county within the region designates one person as the county's representation on a selection committee for the region. If the county is in more than one region, the county chooses one region in which to participate. The selection committee solicits qualified nominees for the region advisory council. Three members of each advisory council serve two-year terms and two serve four-year terms. The selection committees determine which members are to serve the two and four-year terms. Thereafter, the members serve four-year terms. The regional advisory council members are not compensated, but may receive reimbursement for travel expenses.

The chair of the advisory council may remove a member from that council, if the member has missed three consecutive meetings without having the absence excused in advance by the chair. The county legislative authority in the regions may convene a selection committee to fill vacancies. The region advisory council selects a chair and vice-chair and the majority of members constitute a quorum.

The fish and wildlife advisory councils have specific duties including advising on hunting and fishing seasons, bag limits, and other policy proposals. The regional councils solicit

testimony from the general public and experts in the region. The council has the authority to gather relevant information to present to the commission and may make specific recommendations to the commission about policy proposals. It is the duty of each of the regional advisory councils to keep the commission informed on issues.

The commission must consider input and recommendations made by the regional advisory council. If the commission rejects the specific recommendations made by a regional advisory council, the commission must provide a written explanation for the rejection to the council.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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