

Natural Resources Committee

HB 2153

Brief Description: *Modifying the powers and duties of fish and wildlife law enforcement officers.*

Sponsors: *Representatives Kessler, Buck, Doumit and Hurst; by request of Department of Fish and Wildlife.*

Brief Summary of Bill

- *Designates the Department of Fish and Wildlife as a general authority Washington law enforcement agency.*

Hearing Date: *2/26/01*

Staff: *Jason Callahan (786-7117).*

Background:

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) is charged with enforcing the state Wildlife Code. The DFW is listed as a limited authority Washington law enforcement agency. As such, the enforcement authority of DFW agents is limited to a specific subject area. DFW agents may only enforce the non-wildlife criminal laws of Washington when they are acting in their duty and the violation occurs in their presence. If such an event occurs, the DFW officer must report the activity to the Washington State Patrol.

In contrast, general authority Washington law enforcement agencies may enforce any traffic or criminal law of the state throughout the territorial boundaries of the state. An example of a general authority agency is the Washington State Patrol.

Summary of Bill:

The DFW is designated as a general authority Washington law enforcement agency, with enforcement authority equal to that of the Washington State Patrol. The DFW can enforce the traffic and criminal laws of the state throughout the territorial bounds of the state.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 20, 2001..

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