

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 2341

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Natural Resources

**Title:** An act relating to controlling game damage to crops.

**Brief Description:** Attempting to control damage to crops caused by wildlife.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Eickmeyer, Grant, Schoesler, Doumit and Jackley.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Natural Resources: 1/23/02 [DPS].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Requires the Department of Fish and Wildlife to make all reasonable efforts to use a resident of the county to hunt elk or deer causing damage to crops.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Doumit, Chair; Rockefeller, Vice Chair; Sump, Ranking Minority Member; Buck, Eickmeyer, Ericksen, Jackley, McDermott, Orcutt, Pearson and Upthegrove.

**Staff:** Bill Lynch (786-7092).

**Background:**

Wildlife damage to crops is a concern to both farmers and the state. The director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife may pay up to \$10,000 per claim for damages caused to crops by deer or elk. The department on occasion authorizes someone to hunt or haze problem deer or elk in an area where they are causing damage to crops. The department, however, contacts people from a statewide list for this purpose. This means that they don't always use a person who resides within the county to conduct the hunt. People who are not familiar with an area often are not as efficient or successful as persons who are familiar with an area.

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**Summary of Substitute Bill:**

The Department of Fish and Wildlife must maintain a list of qualified people, arranged by county of residence, who have indicated they are available to hunt deer or elk causing damage to crops. Individuals on the list must meet all the qualifications established by the department. The department must update the list at least once every three years.

The department must use the list when contacting people to help control game damage to crops. The department must make all reasonable efforts to use a resident of the county where the activity will occur before contacting a non-resident of the county. The department is required to rotate the names on the list in order to provide a fair distribution of the hunting opportunity.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

Language is added to require the department to update the list at least once every three years, and to rotate the names on the list to provide a fair distribution of the hunting activity. References to harassing or driving-away elk or deer are dropped because they are included within the statutory definition of hunting.

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**Appropriation:** None.**Fiscal Note:** Not Requested.**Effective Date of Substitute Bill:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Testimony For:** Local people should be used to conduct this hunting or hazing activity because they know the territory, the herds, and the herd movements. Elk wipe out a large amount of pasture that livestock need, and continually break fences. A person unfamiliar with the area and the farmers may be bringing firearms too close to buildings, livestock, or people. The department supports the change. The landowner should be at the top of the list for who is called.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Representative Eickmeyer, prime sponsor; Jane Rose and Eleanor Camenzind, Washington Cattlemen's Association and Washington Farm Bureau; Neil Kayse, Washington Cattlemen's Association; Ed Owens, Hunter Heritage Council; and Bruce Bjork and John Broome, Department of Fish and Wildlife.