
Natural Resources Committee

HB 2484

Brief Description: Creating a license plate emblem to benefit orca whale research.

Sponsors: Representatives Morris, Barlean, Anderson, Linville, Doumit, Van Luvan and Ogden.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Orca whale research license plate emblems may be purchased through the Department of Licensing to benefit orca whale research.
- A competition among Washington K-12 students is used for the design of the orca whale research emblem.
- The Department of Fish and Wildlife awards grants for orca whale research on a competitive request-for-proposal process.

Hearing Date: 2/1/02

Staff: Bill Lynch (786-7092).

Background:

The Department of Licensing issues veterans emblems that may be purchased and attached to license plates. The fee charged for these emblems must be established at a level to offset the costs associated with the production and administration of the program. The emblems are produced by correctional industries.

The decline in the orca whale population for certain whalepods has raised some concern because whales act as an indicator species within their environment. Supporters of orca whale research could raise money for this purpose if license plate emblems were available for this purpose.

Summary of Bill:

People may purchase an orca whale research license plate emblem through the Department of Licensing. The department is directed to adopt fees in an amount that offsets the cost of

producing the emblems and which provides funds for orca whale research. The amount of the emblem may not exceed \$25. The Department of Licensing is required to include language in its notices of license plate tab renewals of the availability of these emblems.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife is required to announce a competition for the design of the orca whale research emblem among Washington K-12 students. The Governor is directed to appoint a committee for selecting the winning emblem. The student designing the winning emblem will be issued a scholarship award from the Department of Fish and Wildlife. Subsequent design competitions may be held if it is determined to be cost-effective.

The orca whale research account is created as a non-appropriated account. The account is subject to allotment procedures. Expenditures from the account may only be used for the costs of producing the orca whale research emblems, the costs of administration by the department of licensing, and for orca whale research grants awarded by the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife must administer a grant program for orca whale research by Washington state researchers for J-K-L whalepods in the Salish Sea. The grants must be awarded on a competitive request-for-proposal process. The department is required to adopt necessary policies and rules to establish the application process, the criteria for evaluating the applications, and for monitoring the activities of the grant recipients.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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