

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5831

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources, Parks & Shorelines, February 6, 2002

Title: An act relating to the use of body-gripping traps as they apply to moles, gophers, and mountain beavers.

Brief Description: Allowing the use of body-gripping traps under certain circumstances.

Sponsors: Senators Swecker, Fairley, Oke, Constantine, Regala, Rasmussen and Hochstatter.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Parks & Shorelines: 2/15/01, 3/5/01 [DPS, DNP];
1/30/02, 2/6/02 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS & SHORELINES

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5831 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Jacobsen, Chair; Poulsen, Vice Chair; Hargrove, McDonald and Oke.

Staff: Kari Guy (786-7437)

Background: Initiative Measure 713, approved by the voters in November 2000, prohibits the use of body-gripping traps except in limited circumstances. Body-gripping traps are defined to include leg-hold and Conibear traps. Common rat and mouse traps are not considered body-gripping traps.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Gopher and mole traps are not considered body-gripping traps.

Until July 1, 2006, commercial timber owners or operators may trap mountain beavers with a number 110 Conibear trap if nonlethal controls are not reasonable. The timber owner or operator must report the location and number of mountain beavers trapped to the Department of Fish and Wildlife annually.

Licensed falconers may use foot and leg snares to capture raptors.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill added an exception for licensed falconers to use foot and leg snares.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Initiative 713 was never intended to ban mole trapping, it was intended to ban inhumane trapping for fur. The voters pamphlet stated that mole trapping was not included. Since there is confusion about whether mole trapping is allowed, this bill is needed to clarify. The traps that are now considered illegal are the only effective and environmentally safe way to get rid of moles. Moles are damaging landscaping and parks, and some sports fields are becoming dangerous for kids to play on.

Testimony Against: Proponents of Initiative 713 consistently misled voters about the effects of the initiative. The initiative is not only limiting urban property owners from trapping moles, it is limiting ranchers and farmers from protecting their property as well. Livestock are being killed by predators, and ranchers' hands are tied. If the initiative is amended, it should be amended to resolve the problems for all property owners, not just urbanites.

Testified: Mary Wadel, Nick Wadel, Mole Trappers Assn. of WA; Murray Vining, Mole Trappers Assn. of WA (pro); Craig Vejraska, Okanogan County (con); Ed Owens, Citizens for Responsible Wildlife Management (con); Linda Johnson, Farm Bureau (con); Frederic Blauert, Farm Bureau, WA Sheep Prod. (con); Greg Schoenbachler, Farm Bureau, Silver Springs Ranch (con); Jim Zimmerman, WA Cattlemen's Assn. (con); Chuck Bailey, WA State Trappers Assn. (con); Lisa Nathane, The Humane Society of the U.S. (pro); Russ Cahill, Fish and Wildlife Commission; Bill Garvin, WFDA (pro); Kelli Larson, The Mole Patrol, Inc. (pro); Steve Dauma, WDFW.