

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6313

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources, Parks & Shorelines, January 31, 2002

Title: An act relating to derelict fishing gear.

Brief Description: Providing for the recovery of lost and abandoned fishing gear.

Sponsors: Senator Oke.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Parks & Shorelines: 1/23/02, 1/31/02 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS & SHORELINES

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6313 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Jacobsen, Chair; Poulsen, Vice Chair; Hargrove, McDonald, Morton, Oke, Snyder, Spanel and Stevens.

Staff: Kari Guy (786-7437)

Background: Derelict gear is the term used for fishing nets, traps, or lines that are lost or abandoned in state waters. Derelict gear can continue to catch fish and other marine organisms for long after it is lost. There is currently no incentive to report the loss of gear, and no common procedures for gear removal.

The Northwest Straits Commission received a federal grant to develop protocols for the safe removal of derelict gear, and to inventory and remove derelict gear in the northwest straits of Puget Sound. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife has indicated that a hydraulic project approval will be required for derelict gear removal.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, in partnership with the Department of Natural Resources, the Northwest Straits Commission, and other interested parties, must publish guidelines for the safe removal and disposal of derelict gear. No hydraulic project approval is required for gear removed according to the guidelines.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife must also create a database of known derelict gear. Commercial fishers are encouraged to report the loss of gear to the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife must provide a report to the Legislature by January 1, 2003, on methods to reduce future losses of fishing gear.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The penalty provisions for failure to report the loss of gear are removed. A definition is added.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: This bill will streamline the recovery of derelict fishing gear. Derelict gear not only continues to catch fish for years, but can pose a hazard to divers. Guidelines are needed to ensure safety of divers. The bill will help resolve permitting problems that could delay gear recovery.

Testimony Against: The penalty provisions should not apply to crab pots. Crab pots already have panels that prevent the pots from continuing to catch crab if lost.

Testified: PRO: Josh Weiss, WDFW; Duane Fagergren, Puget Sound Action Team, NW Straits Commission; CON: Robert Briscoe Jr., Puget Sound Crab Assn.