

VETO MESSAGE ON HB 1019-S

April 13, 2001

To the Honorable Speakers and Members,

The House of Representatives of the State of Washington
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning herewith, without my approval, Substitute House Bill No. 1019 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to the fish and wildlife commission;"

The Fish and Wildlife Commission has nine members, three from the east side of the summit of the Cascade mountains, three from the west side of the summit, and three at-large. Substitute House Bill No. 1019 would have required that six of the nine commissioners be appointed to represent each of the six administrative regions of the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The three at-large positions would have remained unchanged.

RCW 77.04 already requires that the governor appoint, with the advice and consent of the senate, three members from the east side of the state and three members from the west side, with no two members being from the same county. The statute, passed in part by referendum of the people, also provides that Commission members have general knowledge of the habits and distribution of fish and wildlife and shall not hold another government office. The governor is also required to seek to maintain a balance reflecting all aspects of fish and wildlife, including representation by organized groups of sportfishers, commercial fishers, hunters, private landowners and environmentalists. I take this charge very seriously and work hard to provide the Commission with a well-balanced group of highly skilled and experienced people.

As written, Substitute House Bill No. 1019 would limit my ability to find the best possible individuals, who must not only reflect these existing statutory requirements, but who must also be willing to fulfill the rigorous demands that are required -- both in terms of time commitment and in terms of formulating policies that guide the Department on very complex issues. I am also concerned that designating commissioners by agency region may limit the flexibility of the Department to make administrative changes. For example, if the Department were to decide it needed to consolidate its regions, it would be hampered from doing so if six of the commission appointments must come from the agency's regions, as they exist today.

While I have vetoed Substitute House Bill No. 1019 in its entirety for the reasons mentioned above, I would be willing to discuss with legislative leaders other possible appointment configurations to the Fish and Wildlife Commission that achieve the regional balance intended by this legislation.

For these reasons I have vetoed Substitute House Bill No. 1019 in its entirety.

Respectfully submitted,
Gary Locke
Governor