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**Agriculture & Natural Resources  
Committee**

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**HB 1787**

**Brief Description:** Minimizing the safety risks posed by wildlife at airports.

**Sponsors:** Representatives B. Sullivan, Hankins, Eickmeyer, Walsh, Williams, Hinkle, Grant and Kessler.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Allows the operators of public airports to remove wildlife that is posing a safety threat without obtaining permits or licenses from the Department of Fish and Wildlife.
- Allows the operators of public airports to use body-gripping traps to capture wildlife that is posing a safety threat.

**Hearing Date:** 2/21/07

**Staff:** Jason Callahan (786-7117).

**Background:**

It is a gross misdemeanor to use any body-gripping trap, which is defined as a trap that grips an animal or an animal's body part, to capture any mammal, or to use a leghold or neck snare trap to capture a mammal for recreation or commerce. It is also illegal to buy, sell, barter, or otherwise exchange the fur of a mammal that has been trapped with a body-gripping trap. Common rat and mouse traps are exempted from the definition of body-gripping traps [RCW 77.15.194].

The Director of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) may grant permits to use certain traps in limited circumstances, including for the protection of public health and safety. Before an individual can be issued a 30-day special permit, he or she must show in writing that the problem can not be reasonably controlled by non-lethal means. The holders of special permits are required to inspect any traps at least once daily [RCW 77.15.194].

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

The Director of WDFW is also authorized to allow WDFW employees and wildlife scientists to use otherwise unlawful traps. Likewise, employees of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service are expressly exempted from the current law's coverage when protecting endangered species [RCW 77.15.194].

In addition to being prosecuted for a gross misdemeanor, a person who violates the provisions of the state trapping law is required to lose his or her trapping privileges for five years. Repeat violators of the state's trapping laws face losing their trapping privileges permanently [RCW 77.15.198].

Trapping fur-bearing mammals with a non-body gripping trap is allowed during trapping seasons. An individual first must possess a WDFW-issued trapping license. Prior to receiving a trapping license, an applicant must complete a course in safe, humane, and proper trapping techniques [RCW 77.65.460]. The WDFW is required to conduct such a program, and focus the education on trapping techniques designed to painlessly capture or instantly kill targeted mammals. In developing the educational program, the WDFW is required to consult with, among others, humane and trapping organizations [RCW 77.65.460].

A trapper must first seek the permission of the landowner before setting a trap on private property, and all traps must carry an identification tag indicating the owner. If a property owner discovers a trap on his or her property, the owner may remove the trap and contact the WDFW for the name and address of the trapper.

**Summary of Bill:**

The Director of the WDFW is directed to authorize the operators of public airports to remove wildlife, other than endangered species, that is posing a threat to human health or safety. Wildlife may be removed by airport operators without permits or licenses issued by the WDFW, and with body-gripping traps, but only if the wildlife is located on the grounds of the airport or in the immediate vicinity. The authority to remove wildlife from airports extends to federal employees invited to control wildlife at the airport.

Wildlife removed by airport operators may not be sold or otherwise entered into commerce.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.