

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5385

As Passed House:
April 21, 2011

Title: An act relating to increasing revenue to the state wildlife account.

Brief Description: Increasing revenue to the state wildlife account.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Regala, Ranker, Rockefeller and Fraser; by request of Department of Fish and Wildlife).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

None.

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 4/21/11, 55-42.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Increases the license fee for certain recreational licenses issued by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.
- Establishes an application fee for certain commercial licenses issued by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.
- Authorizes the State Wildlife Account to retain the interest created by its balance.
- Realigns the various packages available under a big game license.

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

The State Wildlife Account (Wildlife Account) receives various revenues collected by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). This revenue includes, among many items, the sales of many WDFW-issued licenses and tags, administrative penalties, compensation for damages, advertisement sales, and a game fish excise tax.

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 WDFW offers a number of license packages that enable the purchaser to hunt or fish. Within fisheries management, there are separate licensing systems for commercial fishing and recreational (or personal use) fishing. The hunting or fishing license is the standard document issued; however, some activities require the purchase of a tag, stamp, permit, or other form of WDFW-issued permission.

The fee for most licenses is set by statute. During the 2009-11 biennium, the WDFW is directed to collect an additional 10 percent surcharge above the purchase price on all recreational licenses. Applicants for recreational licenses can purchase a license through an automated system available at retail locations. In addition to the purchase price of the license, a fee for the use of the automated system must be paid.

The Wildlife Account does not receive revenue from the sale of annual saltwater, razor clam, or shellfish licenses, nor does it receive revenue from the commercial fish landing taxes. These revenues are dedicated to the General Fund. However, the money deposited into the General Fund from the WDFW activities is directed to be appropriated for the management, enhancement, research, and enforcement of shellfish and saltwater programs.

Monies in the Wildlife Account are used primarily to support the activities of the WDFW. The interest generated by the Wildlife Account is transferred to the General Fund.

Summary of Bill:

License Fee Increases.

The expiration of the current 10 percent surcharge on all recreational licenses is extended from July 1, 2011, until September 1, 2011. On September 1, 2011, a permanent change in the cost of certain recreational licenses takes effect. These changes include the following licenses fee alterations:

- The duplicate catch record card is increased from \$10 to \$11.
- The dungeness crab endorsement is increased from \$3 to \$7.50.
- All packages of the resident big-game hunting license are increased from between \$36 and \$56 to between \$39 and \$75, depending on the package purchased.
- All packages of the non-resident big-game hunting license are increased from between \$360 and \$660 to between \$396 and \$780, depending on the package purchased.
- The special hunt permit for goat, sheep, moose, or other big game not in a big-game license package is increased from \$100 to \$300 (resident) and \$1,000 to \$1,500 (non-resident).
- The multiple-season big-game license is increased from \$150 to \$165.
- The small game hunting license is increased from \$30 to \$35 (resident) and \$50 to \$65 (non-resident).
- The combination recreational fishing license is increased from \$36 to \$45 (resident) and \$72 to \$108 (non-resident).
- The saltwater recreational fishing license is increased from \$18 to \$25 (resident) and \$36 to \$52 (non-resident).

- The freshwater recreational fishing license is increased from \$20 to \$25 (resident) and \$40 to \$75 (non-resident).
- The temporary recreational fishing license is increased from between \$7 to \$8 (resident) and \$14 to \$16 (non-resident) and from \$13 to \$15 (resident) and \$26 to \$30 (non-resident), depending on length of temporary license purchased.
- The charter stamp is increased from \$7 to \$8.
- The recreational shellfish and seaweed license is increased between \$7 to \$10 for resident youth and \$15 to \$18 for non-residents.
- The Columbia River salmon and steelhead stamp is decreased from \$7.50 to \$6 for youth and seniors only.

Application Fees.

Application fees of either \$70 or \$105 are established for commercial licenses, permits, and other documents issued by the WDFW that are not purchased through the automatic licensing system. All application fees are dedicated to the Wildlife Account and are in addition to any licensing fees.

Other Provisions.

Two new sources of revenue are created for the Wildlife Account. The Wildlife Account is added to the list of state accounts that retain its own interest. The Wildlife Account is also listed as the recipient account for saltwater, razor clam, and shellfish licenses. These revenue sources are redirected from the General Fund.

Limitations and specifications regarding the allocation of unanticipated receipts that affect how the WDFW can spend money received from gifts and damage settlements is removed.

Various packages under the big game license are realigned and a new cougar-only package and an elk-only package are created.

One dollar of the funds received from the sale of each Dungeness crab endorsement is allowed to be used for the removal and disposal of derelict shellfish gear. A separate accounting of these funds is required.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary fiscal note available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on September 1, 2011, except for section 5, relating to the extension of the 10 percent surcharge, which contains an emergency clause and takes effect on June 30, 2011.