

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6308

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources & Parks, February 3, 2016

Title: An act relating to migratory bird hunting fees.

Brief Description: Concerning migratory bird hunting fees.

Sponsors: Senators Takko, Warnick and Ranker.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources & Parks: 1/27/16, 2/03/16 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6308 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Pearson, Chair; Dansel, Vice Chair; Jayapal, Ranking Member; Chase, Fraser, Hewitt and Warnick.

Staff: Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

Background: Migratory Bird Permits. In order to hunt for migratory birds, a person must have a small game hunting license and a supplemental migratory bird permit. The statutory fee for the migratory bird permit is \$15.

Based on hunter survey results, the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) determines the relative proportion of waterfowl and non-waterfowl migratory bird hunters. The portion of permit revenue from waterfowl hunters is used for migratory waterfowl habitat acquisition and development, and for enhancement, protection, and propagation of migratory waterfowl. The portion of revenue from non-waterfowl migratory bird hunters is used for the same project types benefitting non-waterfowl migratory birds.

Relevant 2011 Legislation. In 2011, the Legislature passed two separate bills amending statutes that relate to migratory bird permits, stamps, and artwork.

One 2011 bill focused on fish and wildlife licensing fees. The fee bill changed the name of the document required to hunt migratory birds from a migratory bird stamp or validation to a permit, but did not make corresponding changes to the statues relating to stamps and artwork.

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.

A second 2011 bill addressed various state boards and commissions. This bill eliminated the use of a committee to select a migratory bird stamp design and administer the program to sell collector prints and artwork using the design. Instead those functions were assigned to DFW. Additionally the bill eliminated an annual audit requirement.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute): Requires a Study of Migratory Bird Permit Fees and Program Needs. DFW must work with its Waterfowl Advisory Group and other stakeholders to:

- assess migratory bird permit fees and program needs, consideration information such as current and past funding, program capacity for additional projects and activities, and potential impacts of changed fees on license sales; and
- review options and recommendations based on this assessment.

The work must be completed by December 1, 2016. DFW must provide the assessment, options, and recommendations to the Legislature.

Directs an Audit. The State Auditor must audit DFW's use of fees from the sale of migratory bird permits for compliance with statutory requirements. The audit must be completed by December 1, 2016, and provided to the Legislature.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute): Replaces the underlying language with: an assessment of migratory bird permit fees and program needs; and an audit of migratory bird permit revenue.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: PRO: Revenue will go to improve habitat. If we don't have habitat, then we won't have birds to hunt. WWRP funds are not covering habitat needs as they used to. The WDFW Waterfowl Advisory Group recommended and has endorsed this bill. WDFW has established a backload of projects related to waterfowl habitat that we would like to see funded. WWRP-related legislation being heard this session reduces funding for riparian habitat. Ducks Unlimited also supports SB 5380, the duck stamp bill. Drought, urban sprawl, and increasing costs of procuring public hunting lands are all challenges to migratory bird hunting.

CON: We believe fee increases should be used as a last resort.

Persons Testifying on Original Bill: PRO: Senator Takko, prime sponsor; Mark Smith, Ducks Unlimited; Genna Dorow, City of Othello.

CON: Tom Echols, Hunters Heritage Council.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying on Original Bill: No one.