
HOUSE BILL 1639

State of Washington

66th Legislature

2019 Regular Session

By Representatives Kretz, Dent, and Eslick

Read first time 01/25/19. Referred to Committee on Rural Development, Agriculture, & Natural Resources.

1 AN ACT Relating to ensuring that all Washingtonians share in the
2 benefits of an expanding wolf population; adding new sections to
3 chapter 77.36 RCW; and creating a new section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that enthusiasm
6 continues to build throughout the state by the opportunities created
7 as Washington's wolf population continues to grow. Unfortunately,
8 only a limited number of Washington residents are able to appreciate
9 these majestic creatures in the wild. While the number of packs
10 continues to multiply, they remain largely isolated in concentrated
11 pockets of eastern Washington.

12 (2) The legislature further finds that moving a majority of the
13 state's current gray wolf population elsewhere in the state would
14 allow for the apex predators native prey in the region, which has
15 thinned in recent years, to recover, and would simultaneously bring
16 ecological balance to regions of this state that have been awaiting
17 their return for decades.

18 (3) The legislature further finds that although the gray wolf
19 population has flourished since their official return to Washington
20 in 2008, the numerous benefits this animal species brings to the
21 people of Washington requires its protection. The unique geography of

1 one particular region of this state would make it ideal for the
2 translocation of a portion of this species.

3 (4) The legislature further finds Bainbridge Island, known for
4 its beauty and biological diversity, is an ideal location for the
5 first state gray wolf sanctuary. The geographic isolation of
6 Bainbridge Island creates a natural border to keep the wolves
7 isolated to an area where they can be protected, studied, and, most
8 importantly, admired by the region's animal lovers.

9 (5) The legislature further finds the benefits of a wolf
10 sanctuary on Bainbridge Island to include, but not be limited to,
11 balanced ecosystems, and native food sources and habitat to support a
12 growing wolf population. The introduction of this apex predator to
13 the island ecosystem would alleviate concerns of potential trophic
14 cascade in other local species. Bainbridge Island's central location
15 to a number of population centers also makes it an ideal location for
16 the largely untapped wolf tourism industry. The ecological, economic,
17 and spiritual benefits wolves have brought to eastern Washington
18 needs to be shared with the rest of the state.

19 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 77.36
20 RCW to read as follows:

21 (1) The department shall, in an effort to perpetuate the species
22 and minimize landowner conflicts, rely on the translocation of wolves
23 as the primary tool for managing wolf-related wildlife interactions
24 in the areas of the state where wolves are naturally occurring.

25 (2)(a) The department must establish and administer a gray wolf
26 sanctuary on an island in Puget Sound whose total land area is
27 twenty-seven and sixty-one one-hundredths square miles.

28 (b) A wolf may only be translocated from an area of the state
29 where it naturally occurred to the sanctuary established in (a) of
30 this subsection.

31 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 77.36
32 RCW to read as follows:

33 The department shall consider lethal removal of wolves to attempt
34 to change pack behavior to reduce the potential for recurrent
35 depredations while continuing to promote wolf recovery consistent
36 with the following criteria:

37 (1) Lethal removal of wolves must be considered for every four
38 confirmed wolf kills of domestic dogs; for every four confirmed wolf

1 kills of domestic cats; and for every two confirmed wolf kills of
2 children;

3 (2) At least two proactive deterrence measures and responsive
4 deterrence measures have been implemented and failed to meet the goal
5 of changing pack behavior to reduce the potential for recurrent wolf
6 depredations;

7 (3) The department expects depredations to continue;

8 (4) The department has documented the use of appropriate
9 deterrence measures and notified the public of wolf activities in a
10 timely manner; and

11 (5) The lethal removal of wolves is not expected to harm the wolf
12 population's ability to reach recovery objectives statewide or within
13 individual wolf recovery regions.

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