

VETO MESSAGE ON HB 1135-S

May 18, 1993

To the Honorable Speaker and Members

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

I am returning herewith, without my approval, Engrossed Substitute House Bill No. 1135, entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to Alternative Livestock;"

This bill establishes a state policy to encourage the development and expansion of alternative livestock farming. "Alternative livestock" are wild animals which are not native to this state that are being farmed for commercial purposes. I have serious doubts as to whether it is good policy for the state to encourage the development and expansion of alternative livestock farming without further study of the potential risks to our native wildlife and domestic animals and the harm that these risks could present to the hunting and recreational economy of the state.

In addition to my general concern on the policy of the bill, specific sections of the bill raise concerns as well. Section 12 provides a special exemption for the ranching of Rocky Mountain Elk. The Department of Wildlife would be faced with additional enforcement responsibilities of controlling the poaching of live wild elk and the trade of poached wild animal parts passed off as ranched.

Sections 13 and 14 would classify the farming of nonnative wildlife as an "industry" for purposes of the Regulatory Fairness Act, Chapter 19.85 RCW. This would provide the alternative livestock industry with a special preference in terms of the Regulatory Fairness Act and could require small business economic impact statements for the regulation of many additional industries.

Section 13 also requires the preparation of a report to the Legislature on an indemnification process to provide potential relief to the alternative livestock industry if a state regulatory action results in an economic loss. Such a policy would set a precedent which could result in high costs to the taxpayers of the state.

For these reasons, I am vetoing Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1135 in its entirety.

Respectfully submitted,
Mike Lowry
Governor