
**Natural Resources, Ecology &
Parks Committee**

HB 2766

Brief Description: Modifying the definition of "wildlife" and "wild animals."

Sponsors: Representatives Ericksen, Buck and Dunn.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Prohibits the Department of Fish and Wildlife from regulating United States Department of Agriculture-inspected meat from game farms.

Hearing Date: 1/31/06

Staff: Amy Van Horn (786-7168).

Background:

Department of Fish and Wildlife's Authority

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) is charged with preserving, protecting, and managing the wildlife of Washington. Under definitions governing the Department's regulatory authority, "wildlife" includes most animal species whose members exist in the wild in Washington, and "wild animals" includes most such mammals, excluding some rats and mice.

Chronic Wasting Disease

The Department implemented rules on importing deer and elk meat containing bones ("bone-in meat") in 2004, as a response to the spread of chronic wasting disease (CWD). Chronic wasting disease is a disease of the central nervous system related to mad cow disease and is fatal to deer and elk. It is present in several states, but has not appeared in Washington. Chronic wasting disease is transmitted by contact with infected spine and bones, but not by infected meat. As a result, the Department's rules prohibit importing bone-in deer or elk meat or carcasses from states where CWD has been found. Meat without bones, however, may be imported into Washington from any other state without restriction.

Game Farms

Washington itself does not have game farms raising deer and elk, but several other states do. Meat raised on game farms is inspected by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) before sale.

Summary of Bill:

USDA-inspected meat from game farms is excluded from the definitions of "wildlife" and "wild animals" which the Department may regulate.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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