

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6616

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As of January 27, 2006

**Title:** An act relating to limitations on hunting.

**Brief Description:** Limiting hunting near schools.

**Sponsors:** Senators Haugen, Jacobsen and Shin.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation: 1/26/06.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION

**Staff:** Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

**Background:** According to figures from the Office of Financial Management (OFM) for 2005, eight counties contain population densities of greater than 100 persons per square mile. Those counties are Clark, Island, King, Kitsap, Pierce, Snohomish, Spokane, and Thurston counties.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) is charged with the management of the state's wildlife resources, including classifying wildlife, regulating when the taking of wildlife is lawful, regulating the equipment and methods that may be used to take wildlife, and establishing game reserves and areas closed to hunting.

DFW is authorized to establish a special hunt if the director finds that game animals have increased in numbers in an area of the state so that they are damaging public or private property or over-utilizing their habitat.

**Summary of Bill:** In counties with a population density of greater than 100 persons per square mile, hunting is prohibited within one mile of a public or private school serving students in preschool through the 12th grade. The prohibition on hunting is in effect during school hours and during any scheduled school activity or event. DFW may authorize a special hunting season if it determines that there is a need to hunt animals that pose a threat to human safety.

The legislative authority of any county with a population density of less than 100 persons per square mile may adopt this provision.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

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

**Testimony For:** This bill is an attempt to promote safety, not to limit hunting rights. Ammunition from weapons can travel great distances, particularly if deflected. Hunters may not know that a wooded area they are hunting in is located near a school, posing a risk to children.

**Testimony Against:** Determining the areas of a county in which hunting is allowed should remain a local government issue, as statute currently allows. Instead of shutting down entire areas to hunting, a compromise solution should be attempted based on documented problems in a particular area. Determining the specific boundaries where hunting is prohibited under this bill would be a challenge.

**Who Testified:** PRO: Sen. Haugen; Tom Eisenberg, Friends of Camano Island Parks; Dwayne Broderban, Friends of Camano Island Parks; Darcy Patterson, Bicycles Northwest; Mike Hawley, Island County Sheriff; Bill Hanson, WACOPS.

CON: Jack Field, Washington Cattlemen's Association; Joe Waldron, CCRKBA, GOAL, WAC, WCW, WSR&PD; Ed Owens, Hunters Heritage Council; Bruce Bjork, DFW; Richard Mann, DFW; Tom Brandt, citizen.