

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2540

As Reported by House Committee On:
Agriculture & Natural Resources

Title: An act relating to the advisory committee representing the interests of hunters and fishers with disabilities.

Brief Description: Regarding the advisory committee that represents the interest of hunters and fishers with disabilities.

Sponsors: Representatives Warnick, Walsh and Kristiansen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Natural Resources: 1/17/08, 1/21/08 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Makes permanent the advisory committee to the Fish and Wildlife Commission that represents the interests of hunters and fishers with disabilities.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Blake, Chair; VanDeWege, Vice Chair; Kretz, Ranking Minority Member; Warnick, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Eickmeyer, Grant, Lantz, Loomis, McCoy, Nelson, Newhouse and Orcutt.

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

The 2001 Legislature created a temporary advisory committee to the Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) that generally represents the interests of hunters and fishers with disabilities. These interests include special hunts, modified sporting equipment, access to public lands, and increased hunting and fishing opportunities. The seven members of the advisory committee were appointed by the Commission and, in accordance with the 2001 law, is comprised of individuals with disabilities representing the six Department of Fish and Wildlife administrative units and one member appointed at large.

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.

The advisory committee was originally set to terminate on July 1, 2005, and was extended three additional years until July 1, 2008. The Commission was required to submit a report to the Legislature in 2007 that detailed the effectiveness of the advisory committee, and recommend if the advisory committee should be continued or modified.

In its report to the Legislature, the Commission stated that the advisory committee presented information that led to rule making decisions that benefitted the community of disabled hunters, fishers, and wildlife viewers. The Commission concluded in their recommendation that the advisory committee be extended until July 1, 2011.

Summary of Bill:

The advisory committee to the Fish and Wildlife Commission that represents the interests of hunters and fishers with disabilities is changed from a pilot project into a permanent entity.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The advisory committee was a pilot project that has proved to work very well to increase access to individuals with disabilities. The successes of the committee can be based on a number of measures. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) data shows that participation of hunters and fishers with disabilities has increased and policy decisions have been forwarded to and adopted by both the Commission and the Legislature. Some people cannot physically enjoy outdoor activities, and this program helps find a way to include those individuals. The advisory committee provides a mechanism for educating the WDFW about the needs and concerns of individuals with disabilities.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Rep. Warnick, prime sponsor; Albert Vincent, Fish and Wildlife Committee to Persons with Disabilities; Dennis Clay; Ed Owens, Hunter Heritage Council.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.