

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5572

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Natural Resources & Parks, February 12, 2013

**Title:** An act relating to the sea cucumber dive fishery.

**Brief Description:** Regarding the sea cucumber dive fishery.

**Sponsors:** Senators Rolfes and Pearson.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Natural Resources & Parks: 2/12/13 [DP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Pearson, Chair; Smith, Vice Chair; Rolfes, Ranking Member; Kline and Parlette.

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

**Background:** The sea cucumber dive fishery (dive fishery) requires a license issued by the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW). The dive fishery is a limited entry fishery, open since 2000 only to those renewing existing licenses. DFW also administers a statutory, industry-funded license buyback program (buyback program) for the dive fishery. The buyback program is currently authorized through 2013, or until the number of licenses is reduced to 20. There are currently 27 licenses remaining in the dive fishery.

Funding for the buyback program comes from the following industry-funded sources:

- surcharges on a dive fishery license renewal, designating an alternate operator on a dive fishery license, and transfers of a dive fishery license; and
- a portion of the enhanced food fish tax on commercial sea cucumber landings.

Under current law, any fund remaining after the buyback program has reached its statutory license reduction goal must be used for sea cucumber management and enforcement.

**Summary of Bill:** Authorization for the dive fishery buyback program and its funding mechanisms is extended for three additional years through 2016, unless the fishery reaches its statutory license reduction goals sooner.

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Additionally, any remaining funds after the buyback program has reached its statutory license reduction goal must be divided equally among the existing license holders. Current law provides that any remaining money must be used by DFW for sea cucumber management and enforcement.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

[OFM requested ten-year cost projection pursuant to I-960.]

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

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: DFW supports the bill as it extends by three years a very successful program. The participants are supportive of this extension. The divers themselves initially asked to fund their own buyback program to keep the fishery sustainable, and want it to continue on.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Chris Sparks, Joe Littlefield, sea cucumber divers; John Adams, SOS Grassroots Political Action Committee; Bob Sizemore, DFW.