
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6287

State of Washington

63rd Legislature

2014 Regular Session

By Senate Natural Resources & Parks (originally sponsored by Senators Dansel and Benton)

READ FIRST TIME 02/05/14.

1 AN ACT Relating to a pilot program for cougar control; adding new
2 sections to chapter 77.12 RCW; and providing expiration dates.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1)(a) The department, in cooperation and
5 collaboration with the county legislative authorities of Ferry,
6 Stevens, Pend Oreille, Chelan, Okanogan, and Klickitat counties, shall
7 recommend rules to establish a five-year pilot program within select
8 game management units of these counties, to pursue or kill cougars with
9 the aid of dogs.

10 (b) Dangerous wildlife task teams must be developed in each county
11 comprised of representatives from the county and the department. A
12 pursuit season and a kill season with the aid of dogs must be
13 established through the commission's rule-making process, utilizing
14 local dangerous wildlife task teams. The dangerous wildlife task teams
15 shall also develop a more effective and accurate dangerous wildlife
16 reporting system to ensure a timely response.

17 (c) The pilot program's primary goals are to provide for public
18 safety, to protect property, and to assess, conserve, and manage cougar
19 populations.

1 (2) Rules adopted by the commission to establish a pilot project
2 allowing for the pursuit or hunting of cougars with the aid of dogs
3 under this section must ensure that all pursuits or hunts are:

4 (a) Designed to protect public safety or property;

5 (b) Reflective of the most current cougar population data;

6 (c) Designed to generate data that is necessary for the department
7 to satisfy the reporting requirements of section 3 of this act;

8 (d) Consistent with any applicable recommendations emerging from
9 research on cougar population dynamics in a multiprey environment
10 funded in whole or in part by the department; and

11 (e) Designed to minimize the harvest of healthy, dominant males and
12 breeding females in order to promote stability in the social structure
13 of cougar populations.

14 (3) The department may authorize five seasons in which cougars may
15 be pursued or killed with dogs, subject to the other conditions of the
16 pilot program. The seasons are authorized to aid the department in the
17 gathering of information necessary to formulate a recommendation to the
18 legislature regarding whether a permanent program is warranted and, if
19 so, what constraints, goals, and objectives should be included in a
20 permanent program.

21 (4) This section expires July 1, 2019.

22 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) A county legislative authority may
23 request inclusion in the pilot project authorized by section 1 of this
24 act after taking the following actions:

25 (a) Adopting a resolution that requests inclusion in the pilot
26 project;

27 (b) Documenting the need to participate in the pilot program by
28 identifying the number of cougar/human encounters and livestock and pet
29 depredations;

30 (c) Developing and agreeing to the implementation of an education
31 program designed to disseminate to landowners and other citizens
32 information about predator exclusion techniques and devices and other
33 nonlethal methods of cougar management; and

34 (d) Demonstrating that existing cougar depredation permits, public
35 safety cougar hunts, or other existing wildlife management tools have
36 not been sufficient to deal with cougar incidents in the county.

37 (2) This section expires July 1, 2019.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) By September 1, 2018, the department
2 must deliver to the legislature, consistent with RCW 43.01.036, a
3 progress report summarizing the pilot program authorized in section 1
4 of this act. The report must include information relating to how the
5 program has been used to assess cougar population levels and protect
6 public safety and property. The report may also include any
7 recommendations as to how cougar management policies may be changed in
8 the future to achieve more effective or efficient management.

9 (2) This section expires July 1, 2019.

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** Sections 1 through 3 of this act are each
11 added to chapter 77.12 RCW.

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