

SHB 1353 - S COMM AMD

By Committee on Natural Resources & Parks

NOT CONSIDERED 04/06/2017

1 Strike everything after the enacting clause and insert the  
2 following:

3 "NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that the  
4 Colockum elk herd in central Washington is the fifth largest elk herd  
5 in the state and is currently managed for the state by the department  
6 of fish and wildlife.

7 (2) The legislature further finds that the Colockum elk herd has  
8 been the subject of a great deal of planning by the department of  
9 fish and wildlife. The herd is subject to an existing herd management  
10 plan that attempts to ensure a healthy, productive population, manage  
11 the herd for a variety of purposes, and allow for a sustainable yield  
12 within the population. Proper management of the Colockum elk herd is  
13 important, since the herd is a resource that provides significant  
14 recreational, aesthetic, cultural, and economic benefits to  
15 recreationalists, local communities, and native Americans.

16 (3) The legislature further finds that the department of fish and  
17 wildlife has studied the Colockum elk herd as recently as 2012. This  
18 study led to a greater understanding of the challenges facing the  
19 herd and resulted in recommendations as to management approaches to  
20 address those challenges.

21 (4) The legislature further finds that despite the active  
22 management and research by the department of fish and wildlife, there  
23 are still undesirable consequences of the Colockum elk herd's size,  
24 location, and behaviors. These consequences manifest as significant  
25 agricultural crop damage within the herd's range and unacceptably  
26 threatens to degrade highway safety levels on Interstate 90 and other  
27 roadways within the range of the herd due to collisions between herd  
28 members and vehicles.

29 (5) The legislature further finds that the unwanted consequences  
30 of the current Colockum elk herd management protocol are not isolated  
31 to the range of the Colockum herd. Other elk herds in the state are  
32 also the subject of similar management outcomes.

1 (6) The legislature further finds that the department of fish and  
2 wildlife should use the Colockum elk herd as the subject of a pilot  
3 project that explores the benefits of more active management. The  
4 department must work with the Yakama Nation to obtain input from the  
5 tribe on the tribe's recommendations. The pilot project should be  
6 limited in time and geography to ensure that overall herd health is  
7 not disrupted; however, it should be robust enough to offer  
8 scientifically rigorous results.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 77.36  
10 RCW to read as follows:

11 (1) The department must conduct an elk management pilot project  
12 to explore the viability of various wildlife management actions to  
13 reduce elk highway collisions and elk damage to private crop lands.  
14 The pilot project must initially focus on achieving a reduction in  
15 highway collisions on interstate highways, and crop damage on  
16 properties, within the range of the Colockum herd. The department  
17 must invite the Yakama Nation to participate in all aspects of the  
18 project.

19 (2) The department must work with the department of  
20 transportation to explore the viability of various wildlife  
21 management actions to reduce elk highway collisions, initially  
22 focusing on reducing traffic collisions along interstate highways  
23 within the range of the herd.

24 (3) Direct wildlife management efforts must be employed in the  
25 pilot project implemented under this section, including:

26 (a) Increased use of special depredation hunts and general  
27 hunting opportunity within the Colockum herd. Total hunting  
28 depredations under the pilot project must be limited to three hundred  
29 elk per calendar year and these efforts must be designed and  
30 implemented in a manner that does not conflict with the primary goals  
31 of the current elk herd management plan for the Colockum herd;

32 (b) Feeding elk within the pilot project area by persons other  
33 than the department is prohibited, although in no event may this  
34 prohibition affect a person who sets out feed with the intent to feed  
35 domestic animals or livestock, even though such feed may be  
36 inadvertently consumed by elk or other wildlife; and

37 (c) The use of managed livestock grazing to attract elk away from  
38 roads and private property.

1 (4) Consistent with RCW 43.01.036, the department and the  
2 department of transportation must report the results of the pilot  
3 project to the appropriate committees of the legislature by October  
4 31, 2020. Along with results, the departments must report on how the  
5 information gleaned from the pilot project will be used to manage the  
6 Colockum elk herd and other similarly situated elk herds in the  
7 state.

8 (5) This section expires July 1, 2021."

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9 On page 1, line 2 of the title, after "herd;" strike the  
10 remainder of the title and insert "adding a new section to chapter  
11 77.36 RCW; creating a new section; and providing an expiration date."

EFFECT: Invites the Yakama Nation to participate in all aspects  
of the pilot project and prohibits everyone except the department  
from feeding elk.

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