

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2276

As of February 19, 2018

Title: An act relating to notification of wildlife transfer, relocation, or introduction into a new location.

Brief Description: Concerning notification of wildlife transfer, relocation, or introduction into a new location.

Sponsors: House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Representatives Eslick, Haler and Young).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/08/18, 97-1.

Committee Activity: Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks: 2/19/18.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) to provide notice and hold a public hearing prior to the relocation or introduction of certain wildlife into a different location in the state.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, WATER, NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Staff: Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

Background: DFW Wildlife Management. DFW serves as manager of the state's fish and wildlife resources. Among other duties, the agency must classify wildlife and establish the basic rules and regulations governing the time, place, manner, and methods used to harvest or enjoy fish and wildlife. Specifically, this includes the authority to:

- regulate the transportation and possession of fish and wildlife in the state; and
- authorize the removal of wildlife that is destroying property, or when it is necessary for wildlife management or research.

Definition of Big Game. Current statute defines big game to include species such as elk, deer, moose, mountain goat, caribou, pronghorn antelope, mountain sheep, cougar, and bear.

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.

Summary of Bill: DFW must hold a public hearing before agency personnel may relocate or introduce any wolves, coyotes, lynx, bobcats, and animals defined as big game for purposes of population maintenance or enhancement. The meeting must occur in the community most likely to be impacted by the relocation. The presiding official or DFW staff must present the details of the proposed action in sufficient detail to allow an understanding of the reasons for the action and potential impacts. The hearing must be conducted to allow interested persons the opportunity to present comments.

Public notice of the meeting must be provided at least 30 days prior to the date of the meeting, and must state the date, time, and location of the public hearing and a brief summary of the proposed action. The summary must include:

- the species of wildlife;
- the estimated number of animals;
- the general location where the wildlife will be released; and
- the potential range where the wildlife is likely to roam.

A process is provided for distribution of public notice of the meeting including by website, press release, and local government and community sources.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill is all about communication. Sometimes public hearing on wildlife proposals only occurs in larger cities, but DFW should reach out to the affected areas. The value here is in the conversation between the agency and the public about proposals and their potential impacts.

OTHER: DFW appreciates the cooperative work on the bill.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Carolyn Eslick, Prime Sponsor; Cindy Alia, Citizens Alliance for Property Rights, and Cattle Producers of Washington; Tom Davis, Washington Farm Bureau; Ted Jackson, Gold Bar Nature Trails.

OTHER: Nate Pamplin, WDFW.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.