

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1437

As Passed House:

March 2, 2021

Title: An act relating to a vessel crewmember license.

Brief Description: Concerning a vessel crewmember license.

Sponsors: Representatives MacEwen and Eslick.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Rural Development, Agriculture & Natural Resources: 2/9/21, 2/12/21 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/2/21, 96-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes the Fish and Wildlife Commission to adopt fishery-specific rules regarding commercial fishing crewmember licenses.
- Requires crewmember license holders to carry identification.
- Provides that an individual who is prohibited from obtaining a crewmember license may not be covered by a "John Doe" crewmember license held by a commercial fishing license holder.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT, AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Chapman, Chair; Chandler, Ranking Minority Member; Dent, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Fitzgibbon, Klicker, Kloba, Kretz, Lekanoff, McEntire, Morgan, Orcutt, Ramos, Schmick and Springer.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Staff: Rebecca Lewis (786-7339).

Background:

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) manages the commercial harvest of food fish, shellfish, and salmon. Commercial fishers must obtain applicable licenses from the DFW. In general, commercial fishing license fees are structured by species and fishing technique.

Crewmembers of commercial fishing vessels must obtain a crewmember license. Immediate family members, including spouses, children, or grandchildren, of a person who holds a commercial fishing license are exempt from the crewmember licensing requirement.

A commercial fishing license holder may purchase up to two crewmember licenses for any individual working on the vessel named on the commercial fishing license, sometimes referred to as a "John Doe" license. Each "John Doe" crewmember license covers one crewmember per trip.

Summary of Bill:

The Fish and Wildlife Commission may adopt fishery-specific rules to increase the number of commercial fishing crewmember licenses that may be held by a commercial fishing license holder and that pertain to the issuance, validity, use, possession, and display of the license.

Individuals required to have a crewmember license must carry at least one piece of identification that contains their photograph and signature. A "John Doe" crewmember license held by a commercial fishing license holder may not be used to cover an individual who is prohibited from obtaining a crewmember license.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This policy is good for the commercial fishing industry and protecting fisheries. The same policy was introduced in a previous year and passed the House of Representatives unanimously but time ran out before it could make it through the Senate. In 2017 the Legislature created the crewmember license as a part of a comprehensive overhaul of the commercial fishing license fee structure. Each deckhand must have a crewmember license, and licenses are available for purchase online. Last fiscal year, the Department of

Fish and Wildlife (DFW) sold over 800 crewmember licenses through the licensing system and another more than 700 as add-ons to a commercial fishing license. The DFW likes that the bill requires crewmembers to carry identification and ensures that "John Doe" licenses are used to cover crewmembers who are eligible to have their own license. Additionally, the DFW appreciates the industries' interest in having fishery-specific rules, and that the bill directs the Fish and Wildlife Commission to do that rulemaking. Purse seine boat owners are in favor of this policy change. Establishing a crewmember license created needed revenue for the DFW. The limit of two "John Doe" licenses works for small boats but does not work as well for much larger purse seine boats. This bill helps align with similar Oregon laws.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative MacEwen, prime sponsor; Nate Pamplin, Department of Fish and Wildlife; Robert Kehoe, Purse Seine Vessel Owners Association; and Tom Echols, Coalition of Coastal Fisheries.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.