

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## HB 1876

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As of February 15, 2024

**Title:** An act relating to confidential fisheries information collected by other states and maintaining that confidentiality under the public records act.

**Brief Description:** Concerning confidential fisheries information collected by other states and maintaining that confidentiality under the public records act.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Springer, McEntire, Reeves and Thai; by request of Department of Fish and Wildlife.

**Brief History:** Passed House: 2/12/24, 86-11.

**Committee Activity:** State Government & Elections: 2/16/24.

### Brief Summary of Bill

- Exempts from public disclosure certain confidential fishery-related information collected by other states.

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## SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & ELECTIONS

**Staff:** Greg Vogel (786-7413)

**Background:** The Public Records Act (PRA), enacted in 1972 as part of Initiative 276, requires that all state and local government agencies make all public records available for public inspection and copying unless certain statutory exemptions apply. Specific references in the PRA and other statutes remove certain information from application of the PRA, provide exceptions to the public disclosure and copying of certain information, or designate certain information as confidential. The provisions requiring public records disclosure must be interpreted liberally while the exemptions are interpreted narrowly to effectuate the general policy favoring disclosure.

The PRA exempts from public disclosure certain sensitive fish and wildlife data that is

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collected and shared by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) for research and management purposes. Sensitive fish and wildlife data generally includes location data or nesting sites of endangered or threatened wildlife as designated by the Fish and Wildlife Commission or WDFW, or other location data that could compromise the viability of a certain fish or wildlife population. Release of sensitive fish and wildlife data is subject to a confidentiality agreement, except for the release of sensitive fish and wildlife data to the owner, lessee, or right-of-way or easement holder of private land who initially provided the data.

**Summary of Bill:** Fishery-related information that is collected by another state and is regarded as confidential under the laws of that state is exempt from public disclosure under the Public Records Act.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

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