

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5907

As of January 18, 2024

Title: An act relating to providing for recreational licensing of eulachon, crawfish, and carp.

Brief Description: Providing for recreational licensing of eulachon, crawfish, and carp.

Sponsors: Senators Salomon, Lias and Nobles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks: 1/18/24.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides that a person must obtain a recreational fishing or shellfish license in order to fish for carp, smelt, and crawfish.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, WATER, NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Staff: Jeff Olsen (786-7428)

Background: The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is responsible for the management of the state's fish and wildlife resources and establishes basic rules and regulations governing the time, place, manner, and methods used to harvest or enjoy fish and wildlife. As a part of this responsibility, the WDFW issues licenses, tags, endorsements, and permits for hunting and fishing in Washington. Categories of fishing licenses include freshwater licenses, saltwater licenses, and combination licenses. There are several endorsements, stamps, permits, or other surcharges required for particular activities in addition to a fishing license. Fee amounts for fishing licenses, stamps, permits, and endorsements are set in statute. A fishing license is not required to fish for freshwater smelt, carp, or crawfish.

Summary of Bill: A person must obtain a recreational fishing or shellfish license in order

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to fish for smelt, carp, and crawfish.

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: Currently there is no license required to fish for smelt, and there are certain species that are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. By requiring a license, anglers will interact with the WDFW and receive educational materials about the fishery. While there is a 10 pound limit on smelt, many anglers harvest more than the limit. The WDFW prefers to provide education and outreach before a violation occurs, which could happen if a license is required for harvest. It is difficult to enforce fisheries regulations when an angler that does not have a license declares they are fishing for carp. There are invasive species of crawfish, and education and outreach regarding the differences is needed to assist with identifying which species is being harvested.

OTHER: The Cowlitz Tribe has used smelt for many years for ceremonial and subsistence fisheries. Harvesting, hunting, picking, and gathering is not a past time, it is part of their culture. There are serious problems with too many carp in Vancouver Lake and Moses Lake. Requiring a license for carp doesn't make sense when there are already too many fish. Having too many carp can lead to water quality issues and algae blooms. Carp is classified as a food fish, which makes it more difficult to manage when there is an overpopulation. Carp should not be classified as a food fish.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Jesse Salomon, Prime Sponsor; Jeff Wickersham, WDFW; Charlene Hurst, WDFW.

OTHER: James Luce, Friends of Vancouver Lake; Robin Torner, Cowlitz Indian Tribe; Ty Swartout, Moses Lake Watershed Council.

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