

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6020

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks, January 29, 2024

**Title:** An act relating to establishing a Puget Sound nonspot shrimp pot fishery license.

**Brief Description:** Establishing a Puget Sound nonspot shrimp pot fishery license.

**Sponsors:** Senators Muzzall, Braun and Lovelett.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks: 1/22/24, 1/29/24 [DPS].

**Brief Summary of First Substitute Bill**

- Establishes a non-spot shrimp pot-Puget Sound fishery license as a commercial limited entry fishery license.
- Limits entry to the non-spot shrimp pot-Puget Sound fishery to current holders of shrimp trawl-Puget Sound fishery licenses voluntarily choosing to convert their license.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, WATER, NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6020 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Van De Wege, Chair; Salomon, Vice Chair; Muzzall, Ranking Member; Liias, Shewmake, Short, Stanford, Wagoner and Warnick.

**Staff:** Jeff Olsen (786-7428)

**Background:** The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) manages the

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*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.*

commercial harvest of food fish, shellfish, and salmon. Commercial fishers must obtain applicable licenses from WDFW to participate in regulated fisheries. In general, commercial fishing license fees are structured by species and fishing technique, and there is a resident and nonresident fee for each license type.

To fish commercially for shrimp in Puget Sound, a person must obtain a shrimp pot-Puget Sound or shrimp trawl-Puget Sound commercial resident or nonresident license. Both license types are limited entry fisheries, with a resident annual fee of \$335 and a nonresident annual fee of \$720.

WDFW by rule defines non-spot shrimp as the following species of pandalid shrimp including dock shrimp, coonstripe shrimp, humpy shrimp, ocean pink shrimp, pink shrimp, and side stripe shrimp.

**Summary of Bill (First Substitute):** A non-spot shrimp pot-Puget Sound fishery license is established and a person may not fish for non-spot shrimp in Puget Sound for commercial purposes with non-spot shrimp pot gear without a license. A resident annual license fee is \$335 and a nonresident annual fee is \$720. No more than one shrimp trawl-Puget Sound fishery license or non-spot shrimp pot-Puget Sound fishery license may be owned by a licensee. The combined number of shrimp trawl-Puget Sound fishery licenses and non-spot shrimp pot-Puget Sound fishery licenses issued is limited to five licenses in total.

A non-spot shrimp pot-Puget Sound fishery license may only be issued to a natural person who held a non-spot shrimp pot-Puget Sound fishery license or a shrimp trawl-Puget Sound fishery license issued during the previous licensing year. A license may designate only an immediate family member, or an immediate family member of a licensee's spouse, as an alternate operator for the license, with certain exceptions. A licensee may designate any natural person as an alternate operator by requesting the fisheries advisory board designates an alternate who is not an immediate family member.

A shrimp trawl-Puget Sound fishery licensee may voluntarily convert their license to a non-spot shrimp pot-Puget Sound fishery license, and once it is converted it is permanently retired as a shrimp trawl-Puget Sound license.

A converted limited entry non-spot shrimp pot-Puget Sound fishery license may only fish on non-spot shrimp resources previously allocated to shrimp trawl-Puget Sound fishery license holders. If all shrimp trawl-Puget Sound fishery licenses convert to non-spot shrimp pot-Puget Sound fishery licenses, WDFW shall work with stakeholders to review the allocation of the commercial non-spot shrimp resources and develop recommendations for future allocations.

Non-spot shrimp pot-Puget Sound fishery license holders reserve the right to cooperatively modify and design gear with WDFW to efficiently and economically harvest *Pandalus eous*, *Pandalus jordani*, and *Pandalus dispar*. The process to modify and design gear is intended

to develop the fishery to ensure a means to harvest all non-spot shrimp species for these license holders.

Non-spot shrimp is defined to mean a species complex composed of the following species of pandalid shrimp including dock shrimp—*Pandalus danae*; coonstripe shrimp—*Pandalus hypsinotus*; humpy shrimp—*Pandalus goniurus*; ocean pink shrimp—*Pandalus jordani*, pink shrimp—*Pandalus eous*; and side stripe shrimp—*Pandalopsis dispar*.

**EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY AGRICULTURE, WATER, NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS COMMITTEE (First Substitute):**

- Specifies that an immediate family member of a licensee's spouse may be designated as an alternate operator for the license.
- Clarifies that a licensee may designate any natural person as an alternate operator by requesting the fisheries advisory board designates an alternate who is not an immediate family member.
- Makes technical and clarifying changes.

**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 on Original Bill:** *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: The bill provides a framework to replace the trawl fishery over the long term. It is a voluntary program that allows a shrimp trawl license holder to convert to a newly created non-spot shrimp pot license. The policy comes from a Fish and Wildlife Commission directive to reduce nontarget species catch and to have a positive impact on the Puget Sound ecosystem. The proposal was developed by the WDFW working with the commercial fishing industry. There are some technical edits needed to standardize alternate operator provisions with existing licenses. There are currently five non-spot trawl licenses. This change will not create a derby, the new license will catch the trawl fleet quota. There will be some competition with the new fishery license, and some fishers don't want the competition.

CON: This change would have negative consequences for the long term fishery. There is a difference between a proposal on paper versus what happens on the water. The proposal has been rushed, and while it is being sold as an environmental win, it is a money grab. There is only one permit that is profitable, and this would be a 130 percent increase in the pot quota. Unused permits will be converted and enter the fishery. A cheaper trawl license can be converted to a more profitable pot license. The tribes have converted, and biomass

has decreased. There is a concern that if the trawl licenses are converted their quotas will flood the market. The new licenses will compete with the pot shrimp fishers. If there is a concern about the trawl fishery, a better option would be to offer a license buyback, not this proposal.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Ron Muzzall, Prime Sponsor; Aaron Dufault, WDFW; Joe Verdoes; Brian Mackey; Daniel Sund, WDFW.

CON: Kyle Crews, Puget sound shrimp association; Cy Fenton, Puget sound shrimp association; Kevin Nihart, Puget sound shrimp association; Brian Haling.

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