

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2630

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Fisheries & Wildlife*

Title: An act relating to fish and wildlife education.

Brief Description: Appointing a fish and wildlife council to raise funds and develop a species conservation curriculum.

Sponsor(s): Representatives R. King, Orr, G. Cole, Rust, Horn, Fraser, Morris, R. Meyers, Basich, Leonard, Ogden, Valle, Dellwo, O'Brien, Nelson, Jacobsen, Haugen and J. Kohl.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Fisheries & Wildlife, February 6, 1992, DPS.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
FISHERIES & WILDLIFE**

Majority Report: *The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass.* Signed by 8 members: Representatives R. King, Chair; Morris, Vice Chair; Wilson, Ranking Minority Member; Basich; G. Cole; Haugen; Orr; and Spanel.

Minority Report: *Do not pass.* Signed by 3 members: Representatives Fuhrman, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hochstatter; and Padden.

Staff: Keitlyn Watson (786-7310).

Background: RCW 28A.230.020 provides that all common schools shall give instruction in science with special reference to the environment. In 1987, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) developed environmental education guidelines for Washington schools. In 1990, the state Board of Education adopted a resolution which requires the integration of environmental education in grades K-12. In 1990, the governor's Council on Environmental Education was created by Executive Order 90-06 as part of the Environment 2010 Action Agenda. The council is moving from a science-oriented approach to environmental education toward integration of science with language arts, math, social studies, health and physical education, with the intent of providing recommendations on environmental

issues to SPI and the state Board of Higher Education, among others, and with the intent of supporting interdisciplinary programs in K-12. A focus on the importance of fish and wildlife may be lost in these efforts to broaden environmental education.

The school districts are not required to utilize recommendations from the council or SPI. One mechanism to encourage adoption of recommendations at the district level is to provide incentives such as funding.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The governor is given the option of adding to existing duties of the governor's Council on Environmental Education or appointing a new Fish and Wildlife Education Council, to accomplish the following goals:

(1) Raise and distribute public and private funds for the purpose of providing environmental education programs to public and private elementary and secondary schools. The programs are to emphasize the importance of species conservation and fish and wildlife as indicators of ecosystem health; and

(2) Support interdisciplinary programs that integrate fish and wildlife preservation and management with other areas of environmental education.

If a new Fish and Wildlife Education Council is necessary, it shall not commence duties until funding is made available through legislation or donations.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill requires the departments of Fisheries and Wildlife to participate on request in classroom education in the K-12 grades. This was removed from the substitute. The original bill requires that the Department of Fisheries and the Superintendent of Public Instruction develop a new program for the K-12 grades in fisheries ecology, biology, and management. This was removed from the substitute.

The original bill creates a commission on funding for fish and wildlife education, appointed by the governor, to raise and distribute funds according to criteria developed by the commission. Specific duties and staffing requirements and funding mechanisms for the commission are outlined in the original bill. The commission is not appointed until funding is made available through legislation or donations. The substitute bill directs the governor to pursue one of two options to raise funding and support environmental education programs, emphasizing fish and wildlife: (1) add to the existing duties of the governor's Council on

Environmental Education or (2) appoint a new Fish and Wildlife Education Council. If a new council is appointed, it shall not commence duties until funding is made available through legislation or donations.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: (On original bill): Education is an important component of wild fish protection.

Testimony Against: (On original bill): Young people should be learning about agriculture and rangeland management.

Witnesses: Bob Johnson, Trout Unlimited (in favor); Dawn Vyvyan, Yakima Indian Nation (in favor); Pam Madsen, Department of Wildlife (concerns: need to look to the governor's Council on Environmental Education to accomplish the goals of the bill); Robert Snell, Washington Trollers Association (comments: trollers are conducting education projects); and Marlyta Deck, Washington State Cattlemen's Association (opposed to present form, in favor of concept).