

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1455

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES,
FEBRUARY 27, 1992

Brief Description: Regulating seaweed harvesting.

SPONSORS: House Committee on Fisheries & Wildlife (originally sponsored by Representatives Haugen, Wilson, Zellinsky, R. King, Spanel, R. Meyers, Leonard and Orr)

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES & WILDLIFE

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Metcalf, Chairman; Oke, Vice Chairman; Amondson, Barr, Conner, Owen, Snyder, Sumner, and Sutherland.

Staff: Vic Moon (786-7469)

Hearing Dates: February 27, 1992

BACKGROUND:

Marine aquatic plants in Washington include seaweed, eelgrass, and 600 other species. Over 500 species of seaweed exist in Washington's waters. Most are attached to the substrate, but some are free-floating.

As an economic commodity, seaweed is a food used in Japan, Indonesia, and other Asian countries, and by native cultures in the Pacific Northwest. Liquid seaweed extracts are used as soil additives and plant foods. Pharmaceutical products such as agar and carrageenan are produced from seaweed extracts. Phycocolloids are derived from seaweeds. These substances are used in food and industrial products to make them smooth.

Marine aquatic plants attached to state-owned aquatic lands are the property of the state Department of Natural Resources or the State Parks and Recreation Commission, depending on tideland ownership. Marine aquatic plants attached to private tidelands are the property of the private landowner.

The Department of Natural Resources regulates the harvest of seaweed for personal use on state-owned aquatic lands. An individual may receive a permit from the Department of Natural Resources to take up to 50 pounds annually. The Department of Natural Resources currently has in place a moratorium on commercial harvest of seaweed. Enforcement of the taking of valuable materials from state-owned aquatic lands is the responsibility of law enforcement officers. Violations are a criminal offense.

The Department of Fisheries regulates marine aquatic plant harvest indirectly as a component of habitat through its permitting processes. Time, place, and manner of marine aquatic plant harvest is not regulated independently of its direct impact on a fishery.

SUMMARY:

The maximum daily wet weight harvest or possession of seaweed for personal use from all private and state tidelands and state bedlands is 10 pounds per person. A violation of this limit is a misdemeanor. All law enforcement officers, including fisheries patrol officers, may enforce this law.

The Departments of Fisheries and Natural Resources and the State Parks and Recreation Commission are directed to explore the possibility of private funding for marine aquatic plant research.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: none requested

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED SENATE AMENDMENT:

The Department of Fisheries may reduce the personal use seaweed possession limit for conservation purposes.

TESTIMONY FOR: None

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: No one