

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5118

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES,  
FEBRUARY 5, 1991

**Brief Description:** Requiring the department of fisheries to operate a food fish violations toll-free hotline.

**SPONSORS:** Senators Anderson, Oke, Snyder, Metcalf, L. Smith, Vognild, Rasmussen, Conner, Thorsness and Wojahn.

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5118 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

**Staff:** Vic Moon (786-7469)

**Hearing Dates:** January 22, 1991; February 5, 1991

**BACKGROUND:**

The Department of Fisheries patrol officers are difficult or impossible to reach by phone after hours or on the weekends and there is no phone answering system which deals with law enforcement issues at the Department of Fisheries headquarters in Olympia. Numerous violations will go unchecked if members of the public are not able to report suspected violations.

**SUMMARY:**

The Department of Fisheries is directed to offer a statewide 24-hour toll free hotline for reporting food fish law violations. During normal working hours, the hotline will be answered by Fisheries patrol personnel in the Olympia headquarters. Beyond working hours, the department may contract with another governmental agency to answer the hotline and relay information to the appropriate Fisheries Department patrol officers.

The department will make a good faith effort to immediately respond to all calls and the department will contact each person who calls the toll free hotline to report the action taken. The department will publicize the statewide 24-hour hotline and will take steps to ensure that the hotline number is listed in phone books throughout the state and is included with the food fish regulation pamphlet. All other law enforcement entities in the state will be informed about the program.

**EFFECT OF PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE:**

The Department of Fisheries will contract with the Department of Wildlife and use their poaching hotline. An emergency clause is included to ensure rapid action for the 1991 fishing season.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** available

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

Members of the Legislature get calls complaining that no one can reach Fisheries officers or anyone in the department to report violations anytime after 5:00 p.m. or on holidays and weekends when so much fishing occurs.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:**

It is too costly. (Therefore, the substitute bill was drafted.)

**TESTIFIED:** Dayna Matthews, Department of Fisheries (con)