

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5130

**AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES
MARCH 6, 1991**

Brief Description: Reorganizing the department of wildlife.

SPONSORS: Senators Metcalf and Owen.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5130 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: Ross Antipa (786-7413)

Hearing Dates: January 29, 1991; March 6, 1990

BACKGROUND:

The Department of Wildlife was initially formed as the Department of Game by an initiative to the people in 1933. Since that time the agency has changed greatly by assuming many new duties involving management of species which are neither hunted nor fished.

During periods of funding shortfalls the traditional hunting and fishing programs must compete for scarce funding with other department needs. Many people are concerned about the proper way in which to fund the programs of the Department of Wildlife.

SUMMARY:

The Department of Wildlife is divided into two major programs: the habitat and research program and the fishing and hunting program. Existing personnel, facilities, funding and responsibilities are divided between the programs. A new funding source for the department is created. A 2.0 percent tax is established on outdoor equipment and is assessed at the wholesale level. Funds from the new tax are dedicated to the habitat and research program. Studies and reports are required for the purposes of improving department efficiency and accountability.

EFFECT OF PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE:

Provisions relating to a new tax on outdoor equipment are deleted, as are studies relating to efficiency. Programs, employees, and facilities are not reorganized. The division of expenditures into consumptive and nonconsumptive programs

is examined by the Legislative Budget Committee and guidelines are set for the director to segregate expenditures into consumptive or nonconsumptive programs. The director shall consult with legislative committees on department funding issues.

Appropriation: \$15,000 to State Energy Office

Revenue: yes

Fiscal Note: requested January 23, 1991

Effective Date: January 1, 1992

TESTIMONY FOR:

There needs to be additional funding for the department from sources other than hunting and fishing licenses and fees.

TESTIMONY AGAINST:

There is uncertainty on how the department could be reorganized to improve efficiency.

TESTIFIED: Curt Smitch, Director, Department of Wildlife (pro); Arthur Solomon, Inland NW Wildlife Council; James Glick (pro); Jim King, Washington State Sportsmen's Council; Mitch Johnson, Tacoma Sportsmen's Club; Jeff Parsons, National Audubon Society