

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 2431

As Passed House:

February 17, 2004

Title: An act relating to Dungeness crab endorsement.

Brief Description: Establishing a Dungeness crab endorsement.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Fisheries, Ecology & Parks (originally sponsored by Representatives Upthegrove, Cooper and Chase).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Fisheries, Ecology & Parks: 1/29/04, 2/6/04 [DPS];

Appropriations: 2/9/04 [DPS(FEP)].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/17/04, 76-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires a catch record card endorsed for Dungeness Crab for Puget Sound recreational fishers to take or possess Dungeness crab.
- Dungeness crab endorsements may not exceed \$3, and funds from the endorsement may only be used for monitoring and management of Dungeness crab recreational fisheries.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES, ECOLOGY & PARKS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Cooper, Chair; Upthegrove, Vice Chair; Sump, Ranking Minority Member; Hinkle, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Buck, Hatfield, O'Brien, Pearson and D. Simpson.

Staff: Jeff Olsen (786-7157).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill by Committee on Fisheries, Ecology & Parks be

substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 27 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Fromhold, Vice Chair; Sehlin, Ranking Minority Member; Pearson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Anderson, Boldt, Buck, Chandler, Clements, Cody, Conway, Cox, Dunshee, Grant, Hunter, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Linville, McDonald, McIntire, Miloscia, Ruderman, Schual-Berke, Sump and Talcott.

Staff: Dave Johnson (786-7154).

Background:

A personal use saltwater, freshwater, combination, or temporary license is required for all persons 15 years of age or older to fish for or possess fish or shellfish taken for personal use from state or offshore waters. Temporary fishing licenses are issued either as a license document requiring personal identification or as a stamp. Charter boats may sell temporary fishing license stamps to customers which are valid for two consecutive days.

In addition to a recreational license, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) currently requires fishers to report their harvest activity on catch record cards for salmon, steelhead, sturgeon, halibut, and Dungeness crab. Initial catch record cards are provided free with the purchase of a license, and additional or duplicate catch record cards cost \$10 each. Catch estimates generated by the catch record card system are used by the WDFW to manage fisheries. However, since a catch record card contains a variety of species, WDFW is unable to sample only Dungeness crab recreational fishers.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

A catch record card endorsed for Dungeness crab is required for Puget Sound recreational fishers to take or possess Dungeness crab. Dungeness crab endorsements may not exceed \$3, and funds from the endorsement may only be used for sampling, monitoring and management of Dungeness crab recreational fisheries. Catch record cards issued with affixed temporary charter stamps are not subject to the Dungeness crab endorsement fee.

The Department must evaluate the effectiveness of the Dungeness crab endorsement as a method for improving the accuracy of the catch estimate for Puget Sound Dungeness crab recreational fisheries and report their findings to the Legislature by May 15, 2006.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available on original bill.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect December 1, 2004.

Testimony For: (Fisheries, Ecology & Parks) The Department uses phone surveys to develop mid-season estimates, and must survey all catch record cards. This bill would reduce the sample size and increase the accuracy of the harvest. The lack of accuracy has been a frustration to both commercial and recreational harvesters. There were significant losses to commercial harvesters from recreational over-harvesting, resulting in lost jobs and income. Funds from the endorsement will be dedicated to managing the resource.

The current catch record system is flawed. Perhaps a lower number of crabs should be allowed per catch record card to further improve information. Commercial fishers and tribal fishers must report all of their harvest. Every crab counts, so we should count every crab.

Testimony For: (Appropriations) This will allow the Department to better manage sport crab fisheries. This will help avoid untimely closures for both the sport and commercial sides. It also gives the Department the ability to increase its surveys and increase its management.

Testimony Against: (Fisheries, Ecology & Parks) None.

Testimony Against: (Appropriations) None.

Persons Testifying: (Fisheries, Ecology & Parks) (In support) Gary Hulse, East Jefferson Puget Sound Angler; Morris Barker, Department of Fish and Wildlife; Clint Muns, Puget Sound Anglers; Corey Freeman, NSIA/REA/Trout Unlimited; Ed Owens, Coalition of Coastal Fisheries; and John Rantz and Karen Thompson, Puget Sound Crab Association.

Persons Testifying: (Appropriations) Corey Freeman, Northwest Sport Fishing Industry Association, Recreational Fishing Alliance, Trout Unlimited, and Puget Sound Anglers.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: (Fisheries, Ecology & Parks) None.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: (Appropriations) None.