

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1249

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation, March 28, 2007

Title: An act relating to hunter education.

Brief Description: Authorizing a one-year deferral of hunter education training.

Sponsors: House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Representatives Blake, Kretz, Orcutt, Takko and Haigh).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/13/07, 96-0.

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation: 3/22/07, 3/28/07 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Jacobsen, Chair; Rockefeller, Vice Chair; Morton, Ranking Minority Member; Fraser, Hargrove, Spanel, Stevens and Swecker.

Staff: Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

Background: A recreational license issued by the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) is required to hunt for classified wildlife in Washington. When purchasing a hunting license, persons under the age of 18 must present certification of the completion of a course of instruction of at least ten hours in the safe handling of firearms, safety, conservation, and sportsmanship. This requirement also applies to persons purchasing a hunting license for the first time if born after January 1, 1972.

The hunter education program is managed by DFW. Courses focus on the topics of firearms and outdoor safety, wildlife management, and hunter responsibility. The average course includes between four to six sessions and spans a total of 16 hours or more. All hunter education instructors are certified by DFW.

Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill: DFW may authorize a once in a lifetime, one year deferral of the hunter education requirement for persons accompanied by a licensed hunter who: (1) has held a hunting license for the prior three years; and (2) is over 18 years old. DFW may charge a fee not to exceed \$20 for the one year deferral of the hunter education requirement, which must be used exclusively to administer the deferral program.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

In most circumstances, if either the hunter receiving the hunter education deferral or the accompanying hunter is convicted of a violation of the Fish and Wildlife Code, DFW may revoke either of the hunters' licenses and tags and suspend hunting privileges for one year.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill will create some flexibility relating to the hunter education requirement for visitors, youth, and the military. The safety issue is addressed by requiring those receiving a deferral to hunt with an experienced hunter. It will also help create new hunters by allowing people to try hunting for one year without having to go through the whole hunter education process. Multiple states have adopted similar measures, which have proved to be very successful.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Ed Owens, Hunter's Heritage Council; Bruce Bjork, Mik Mikitik, DFW.