

SENATE BILL REPORT

2SSB 5188

As Amended by House, April 10, 2007

Title: An act relating to a wildlife rehabilitation program.

Brief Description: Establishing a wildlife rehabilitation program.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Haugen, Jacobsen, Prentice, Fairley, Kline, Marr, Kohl-Welles, Tom, Murray, Keiser and Rasmussen).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation: 2/07/07, 2/26/07 [DPS-TRAN].

Transportation: 2/28/07, 3/1/07 [DP2S, w/oRec].

Passed Senate: 3/12/07, 43-6.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5188 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Transportation.

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

Staff: Kim Johnson (786-7346)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: That Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 5188 be substituted therefor, and the second substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Marr, Vice Chair; Murray, Vice Chair; Swecker, Ranking Minority Member; Berkey, Clements, Delvin, Eide, Jacobsen, Kastama, Kauffman, Kilmer, Sheldon and Spanel.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Holmquist.

Staff: Janice Baumgardt (786-7319)

Background: The Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) has the authority to manage and protect the wildlife in Washington State. Wildlife rehabilitation is defined by administrative code as "the care and treatment of injured, diseased, oiled, or abandoned wildlife, including ,

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but not limited capture, transporting, veterinary treatment, feeding, housing, exercise therapy, and any other treatment or training necessary for release back to the wild."

Wildlife rehabilitation is a profession that is licensed by the DFW. It is currently unlawful for a person to possess wildlife for the purpose of rehabilitation unless that person has a valid wildlife rehabilitation permit, or is working under the supervision of a person with a valid permit.

The Department of Licensing currently collects a fee of \$40 for the privilege of purchasing a personalized license plate. The revenue is deposited into the state wildlife account.

Summary of Second Substitute Bill: The DFW must establish a wildlife rehabilitation program. The DFW must contract for wildlife response and rehabilitation services in each of the six administrative regions. To be eligible to participate in the program, a wildlife rehabilitator must: be properly licensed under state and federal law; submit to a criminal background check; possess a certificate in chemical immobilization; provide a letter from a sponsoring veterinarian; and demonstrate experience, knowledge, or training in proper methods for testing for disease, capture, handling, transporting, and housing of sick, injured, or diseased wildlife. Expenditures that are permitted under this program include: reimbursement for diagnostic and lab support services; purchase and maintenance of restraints and equipment used in the capture, transportation, temporary housing, and release of wildlife; and reimbursement for the cost of contracted veterinarian services. Funds may not be used to rehabilitate nonnative species and/or nuisance animals.

A fee of two dollars is added to the cost of a personalized license plate and dedicated to the Wildlife Response and Rehabilitation Account. The additional fee is collected effective with registrations due or to become due on or after January 1, 2008.

The DFW must develop a process for renewing wildlife rehabilitation licenses. All wildlife rehabilitation licenses issued by the DFW prior to January 1, 2006, must be renewed by January 1, 2010.

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 (Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation): PRO: There used to be staff at the DFW to help respond to incidents involving wildlife. Over the years due to funding cuts, etc., there now is no one to help law enforcement respond to these incidents. Additionally there are now more people and communities moving out into areas where interaction with wildlife is inevitable and potentially very dangerous. There are volunteers out there that work with DFW and local law enforcement to respond to wildlife related incidents, but the financial burden placed on these volunteers has put many of them in the situation where they no longer help because it simply costs too much. This bill establishes a responsible program and a dedicated funding source to get money out to people with the

proper training and education who can help our law enforcement officers and the public deal with wildlife incidents in a responsible and safe manner.

OTHER: DFW manages on a population basis, rather than an individual animal basis. There has not been the funding to focus down to the individual animal basis. For over 30 years the use of personalized license plate money has been dedicated to non-consumptive wildlife work. We worry that any attachment of additional fees to this funding source will threaten the personalized license plate revenue with diversion to other uses. The criteria specified in this bill may be too tight to allow for a large enough applicant pool.

Persons Testifying (Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation): PRO: Senator Haugen, prime sponsor; Sue Murphy, citizen.

OTHER: Tom Davis, Peggy Crain, Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Transportation): PRO: This provides funding for important work that Fish and Wildlife officers don't have the time to do. The language regarding hound handlers doesn't fit the rest of the bill and is unnecessary because it is the Department of Fish and Wildlife's policy to reimburse hound handlers for damage to personal property that occurs in the course of assisting with problem wildlife.

Persons Testifying (Transportation): PRO: Senator Haugen, prime sponsor; Tom Davis, Department of Fish and Wildlife.

House Amendment(s): The legislative findings are modified to refer only to the work of licensed wildlife rehabilitators.