
**Agriculture & Natural Resources
Committee**

HB 1225

Brief Description: Increasing the social acceptance of endangered species recovery by providing the fish and wildlife commission with the tools necessary to enact changes to the status of a species.

Sponsors: Representatives Kretz, Blake, Short, Wilcox, Scott and Buys.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the Fish and Wildlife Commission to consider petitions for changing the classification of an endangered, threatened, or sensitive species on a regional basis based on the biological status of the species in the proposed region and not on the region's contribution to overall statewide recovery.

Hearing Date: 2/5/15

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) operates under a legislative mandate to preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage the state's wildlife. Wildlife is defined as all species of the animal kingdom whose members exist in Washington in a wild state. This includes: mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and invertebrates.

The Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) has the authority to identify species that are seriously threatened with extinction and designate those species as endangered. Such a species classification must be requested by the Director of the WDFW (RCW 77.12.020). The Commission may only list a species as endangered, threatened, or sensitive solely on the basis of the biological status of the species being considered. This decision must be based on the

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preponderance of scientific data. Species may be classified when populations are in danger of failing, declining, or are vulnerable (WAC 232-12-297).

Once listed, the Commission must also rely on the preponderance of available scientific data when making delisting or reclassification decisions. A species may be delisted from endangered, threatened, or sensitive only when populations are, solely on the basis of the biological status of the species being considered, no longer in danger of failing, declining, are no longer vulnerable. A delisting process may initiated by the WDFW directly or by a petition to the WDFW by an interested person that sets forth the scientific data and specific evidence supporting the delisting of the species (WAC 232-12-297).

The listing of a species by the Commission requires the creation of a management plan for the species. The management plan must identify target population objectives, reclassification criteria, an implementation plan, public education, and a species monitoring plan (WAC 232-12-297).

Summary of Bill:

The Commission is directed to consider petitions for changing the classification of an endangered, threatened, or sensitive species on a regional basis. In determining the validity of petitions for regional classification changes, the Commission must consider the biological status of the species in the proposed region and not on the region's contribution to overall statewide recovery. The ultimate decision by the Commission must be based on the preponderance of the scientific information available and the species' status under the federal Endangered Species Act.

A regional change in the classification of a species requires the Commission to amend any statewide management plans or administrative rules.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.