
**Rural Development, Agriculture, &
Natural Resources Committee**

HB 2250

Brief Description: Concerning coastal crab derelict gear recovery.

Sponsors: Representatives Blake, Fitzgibbon, Lekanoff and Tharinger.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes the Department of Fish and Wildlife, in cooperation with current commercial coastal Dungeness crab license holders, to expand the commercial Dungeness crab pot removal program during the fishery that occurs from May 1 through September 15.

Hearing Date: 1/17/20

Staff: Rebecca Lewis (786-7339).

Background:

In order to engage in commercial fishing in Washington, an individual is required to acquire the appropriate commercial fishing license or permit from the Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). Fishing seasons are set by the WDFW through rulemaking, and the coastal commercial Dungeness crab season typically begins in December or January.

The WDFW administers the Coastal Commercial Dungeness Crab Pot Removal Program (Program). Under the Program, the WDFW issues a crab pot removal permit (permit) that allows participants in the coastal commercial Dungeness crab fishery to remove crab pots from coastal marine waters beginning 15 days after the close of the primary harvest season, regardless of whether the crab pot was originally set by the participant or not. In cooperation with individuals holding a current commercial Dungeness crab-coastal license, the WDFW may expand the Program to areas closed to commercial Dungeness crab harvest prior to the end of the primary harvest season.

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.

The WDFW may exempt certain crab pots from the Program, restrict crab pot removal activities to specific geographic areas, and adopt rules related to the Program. Unlawful use of a crab pot removal permit is a misdemeanor. Individuals participating in the Program are exempt from applicable lost and found property laws.

Summary of Bill:

In cooperation with current commercial coastal Dungeness crab license holders, the Department of Fish and Wildlife may expand the commercial Dungeness crab pot removal program to areas closed to commercial Dungeness crab harvest during the fishery that occurs from May 1 through September 15, in addition to the primary season.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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