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

SSB 6613

Brief Description: Concerning the inspection of marine aquatic farming locations.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks (originally sponsored by Senators Rolfes, Lovelett and Saldaña).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires rules related to the operation of marine finfish aquatic farming locations to provide for the recovery of actual costs incurred for required inspections, monitoring, and compliance testing by the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Hearing Date: 2/26/20

Staff: Rebecca Lewis (786-7339).

Background:

Aquaculture Permitting.

Aquaculture is the process of growing, farming, or cultivating aquatic products in marine or freshwater environments. Aquatic products include plants, shellfish, and finfish. There are four main state permits or approvals necessary to conduct net pen aquaculture in Washington's marine waters: (1) a national pollutant discharge elimination system (NPDES) permit through the Department of Ecology (Ecology); (2) an aquatic farm registration through the Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW); (3) a marine finfish aquaculture permit from the WDFW; and (4) fish transport permits from the WDFW.

National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit.

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 federal Clean Water Act establishes NPDES, which regulates discharges of pollutants to surface waters. In Washington, NPDES permitting authority is delegated to the state, allowing Ecology to issue NPDES permits.

Permits and Registrations Administered by the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

An aquatic farmer must obtain a marine finfish aquaculture permit, valid for five years, from the WDFW in order to raise any species of marine finfish in net pens in Washington's marine waters. The aquatic farmer must include an operations plan, escape prevention plan, and an escape reporting and recapture plan with the permit application. An aquatic farmer must obtain a fish transport permit from the WDFW each time the farmer transports live fish or fish eggs within the state to ensure that live finfish brought into the state are free from reportable fish pathogens and that aquatic invasive species are not shipped with the desired fish species.

Aquaculture Rulemaking.

The director of the WDFW is responsible for developing rules for implementing, administering, and enforcing marine finfish aquaculture programs in cooperation with finfish aquatic farmers. The rules must include procedures for inspecting marine aquatic farming locations on a regular basis to determine conformity with laws and rules relating to operation of marine aquatic farms.

Summary of Bill:

Rules related to the operation of marine finfish aquatic farming locations must provide for the recovery of actual costs incurred for required inspections, monitoring, and compliance testing of marine finfish aquatic farms by the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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