
HOUSE BILL 2055

State of Washington

66th Legislature

2019 Regular Session

By Representatives Dent, Lekanoff, Eslick, Blake, Pettigrew, Dye, Lovick, Sutherland, and Appleton

Read first time 02/14/19. Referred to Committee on Rural Development, Agriculture, & Natural Resources.

1 AN ACT Relating to expanding the elk management pilot project;
2 amending RCW 77.36.190; providing an expiration date; and declaring
3 an emergency.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 77.36.190 and 2017 c 244 s 2 are each amended to
6 read as follows:

7 (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this
8 specific purpose, the department (~~((must))~~) shall work with tribal
9 comanagers to conduct an elk management pilot project to explore the
10 viability of various wildlife management actions to reduce (~~((elk~~
11 ~~highway))~~) elk-vehicle collisions on highways and elk damage to
12 private crop lands. The pilot project must initially focus on
13 achieving a reduction in (~~((highway))~~) collisions on (~~((interstate))~~)
14 highways, and crop damage on properties, within the range of the
15 Colockum and north Cascades elk herds. The department and the
16 comanagers must invite the Yakama Nation, the Point Elliott treaty
17 tribes, the department of natural resources, the department of
18 transportation, local agricultural producers, hunting groups, and the
19 department of defense, to participate in all aspects of the project.

20 (2) The department must work with the department of
21 transportation to explore the viability of various wildlife

1 management actions to reduce (~~elk-highway~~) elk-vehicle collisions
2 on highways, initially focusing on reducing traffic collisions along
3 (~~interstate~~) highways within the range of the herds. The two
4 departments shall trial various ways of keeping animals off of
5 roadways, including new fencing techniques, lights, and signage. In
6 addition, the departments shall scope wildlife corridors and safe
7 crossing locations.

8 (3) Direct wildlife management efforts must be employed in the
9 pilot project implemented under this section, including:

10 (a) Increased use of special depredation hunts (~~and~~), general
11 hunting opportunity (~~within the Colockum herd~~), tribal hunting
12 opportunities, and hunting opportunities for youth and persons with
13 disabilities. Total hunting depredations under the pilot project must
14 be limited to (~~three~~) four hundred elk per calendar year and these
15 efforts must be designed and implemented in a manner that does not
16 conflict with the primary goals of the current elk herd management
17 plan for the Colockum and north Cascades elk herds;

18 (b) The department must work to reduce artificial feeding of elk
19 within the pilot project area by persons other than the department
20 (~~is prohibited, although~~). In no event may this (~~prohibition~~)
21 effort affect a person who sets out feed with the intent to feed
22 domestic animals or livestock, even though such feed may be
23 inadvertently consumed by elk or other wildlife; (~~and~~)

24 (c) The (~~use of managed livestock grazing to attract elk away~~
25 ~~from roads and private property~~) department shall, in conjunction
26 with increased collaboration with local landowners, increase pressure
27 on elk in agricultural areas through year-round hazing, and shall
28 monitor the effectiveness of the hazing pressure;

29 (d) The department shall establish a pilot compensation program
30 for impacts to managed pasture and fencing in partnership with either
31 the department of agriculture or the Washington State University
32 cooperative extension service. The pilot program must develop a tool
33 that quantifies the impacts to managed pastures. The pilot must also
34 explore the concept of a local hay and fertilizer bank. For the
35 purposes of this subsection (3)(d), "managed pasture" means pasture
36 grown using common agricultural methods including one or more of the
37 following: Seeding; planting; fertilizing; or irrigating;

38 (e) The department shall explore increasing forage for elk on
39 public lands and private lands away from agricultural areas, as well
40 as the use of managed livestock grazing to attract elk away from

1 roads, populated areas, and agricultural lands. The department must
2 work with forestland owners to identify incentives for improved elk
3 habitat;

4 (f) The department shall scope translocation of elk to more
5 suitable habitat within the range of the herd, provided the
6 department first determines that such a translocation does not pose a
7 risk of disease transmission;

8 (g) The department shall employ a combined approach of all
9 reasonable tools to move elk off of agricultural lands, including
10 fencing, noise deterrents, hay and fertilizer bank, and lethal
11 methods; and

12 (h) The department shall undertake a study with the Point Elliott
13 treaty tribes to determine locations for upland feeding, best access
14 routes to uplands, and expected movement of elk, in order to minimize
15 damage to agricultural land. All raw and final data must be shared in
16 a reasonable and timely fashion with all comanagers and stakeholders
17 identified in subsection (1) of this section.

18 (4) Consistent with RCW 43.01.036, the department and the
19 department of transportation must report the results of the pilot
20 project to the appropriate committees of the legislature by October
21 31, 2020. Along with results, the departments must report on how the
22 information gleaned from the pilot project will be used to (~~manage~~
23 ~~the Colockum elk herd and other similarly situated~~) inform
24 management of other elk herds in the state.

25 (5) This section expires July 1, ((2021)) 2023.

26 NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. This act is necessary for the immediate
27 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of
28 the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes
29 effect immediately.

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