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

HB 1431

Brief Description: Encouraging youth participation in fishing and shellfishing.

Sponsors: Representative Rule.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates a grant program and associated account to assist certain organizations establish fishing gear rental systems.
- Increases the youth age for the purpose of fishing licenses to 18 years old.

Hearing Date: 2/5/21

Staff: Rebecca Lewis (786-7339).

Background:

Fishing Licenses.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) is responsible for the management of the state's fish and wildlife resources and establishes basic rules and regulations governing the time, place, manner, and methods used to harvest or enjoy fish and wildlife. As a part of this responsibility, the Department issues licenses for fishing in Washington. Categories of fishing licenses include freshwater licenses, saltwater licenses, and combination licenses. There are several endorsements, stamps, permits, or other surcharges required for particular activities in addition to a fishing license. Fee amounts for fishing licenses, stamps, permits, and endorsements are set in statute. Individuals age 15 and older must purchase a fishing license.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Youth under age 16 are not required to purchase fishing licenses; however, to fish for salmon, steelhead, sturgeon, or Puget Sound Dungeness crab, youth must hold a catch record card and, if applicable, a Puget Sound Dungeness crab endorsement. There is no charge for the first catch record card. Subsequent catch record cards are \$11 each.

The Recreation and Conservation Office.

The Recreation and Conservation Office administers several grant programs for numerous boards and councils to create outdoor recreational opportunities, protect the state's wildlife habitat and farmland, and assist salmon recovery efforts.

Summary of Bill:

The Youth Fishing Opportunities Grant Program (Program) is created with an associated account. The Recreation and Conservation Office is responsible for administering the Program. Grant funds may be distributed to certain organizations, such as Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups, local parks and recreation districts, or Boys and Girls Clubs or other similar youth organizations, to establish fishing equipment rental systems. Funds in the account may be spent only after appropriation, and the account may receive gifts, grants, and donations.

The youth age for the purposes of fishing licenses is changed from age 15 to age 18 and under. As a result, fishing licenses are required for all individuals age 19 and over.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 30, 2021.

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