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**Agriculture and Natural Resources  
Committee**

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**HB 1699**

**Brief Description:** Concerning establishing salaries for the Washington fish and wildlife commission.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Kretz, Chapman, Lekanoff, Schmick, Springer, Dent and Morgan.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Replaces the current method of compensation for Fish and Wildlife Commissioners with an annual salary established by the Washington Citizens' Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials.

**Hearing Date:** 2/10/23

**Staff:** Rebecca Lewis (786-7339).

**Background:**

Fish and Wildlife Commission.

The Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) is composed of nine members appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. Each even-numbered year, three commissioners are appointed for six-year terms. Three members of the Commission must reside in Eastern Washington, three in Western Washington, and the remaining three members are appointed at-large. No two members may reside in the same county. If a vacancy occurs on the Commission before the end of the Commissioner's term, the Governor must appoint a successor within 60 days to complete the term.

The Commission operates under a statutory mandate to preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage Washington's wildlife, food fish, game fish, and shellfish. The Department of Fish and Wildlife

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(Department) has been delegated the responsibility to carry out this mandate at the direction of the Commission.

Commissioners are eligible to receive compensation of up to \$100 per day during which the Commissioner attends an official Commission meeting or performs statutorily prescribed duties, as long as the Commissioner does not occupy a full-time position in any agency of the federal government, state government, or local government in Washington and receives any compensation from such government for working that day. Additionally, Commissioners are eligible for reimbursement for travel expenses incurred while engaged in official business away from their usual place of residence.

#### Washington Citizens' Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials.

The Washington Citizens' Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials (Citizens' Commission) was created through a constitutional amendment in 1986 and is responsible for setting and adjusting the salaries of state elected officials. State elected officials include members of the Legislature, all elected officials of the executive branch of government, and all judges of the Washington Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, superior courts, and district courts.

When setting salaries, the Citizens' Commission either:

- makes salary adjustments to individual positions, a position category for equity or alignment purposes or to account for additional duties or responsibilities;
- grants a general wage adjustment or makes flat dollar adjustments to individual positions, a group or groups of positions, or to all positions; or
- makes no change to current salary levels.

The Citizens' Commission may not decrease the salaries of the state's elected officials during their current term of office and does not have jurisdiction over benefits the elected officials receive.

The Citizens' Commission is composed of 17 members. Ten members, one from each congressional district, are randomly selected by the Secretary of State from the rolls of registered voters. Seven members are selected jointly by the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House of Representatives (Speaker), one each from:

- private institutions of higher education;
- business;
- professional personnel management;
- the legal profession; and
- organized labor.

Additionally, two members are recommended to the President of the Senate and to the Speaker, one by the chair of the Washington State Personnel Resources Board and the other by the presidents of the state's four-year institutions of higher education.

#### **Summary of Bill:**

The provision is removed that allows Fish and Wildlife Commissioners receive compensation of up to \$100 per day during which the Commissioner attends an official Commission meeting or performs statutorily prescribed duties, as long as the Commissioner does not occupy a full-time position in any agency of the federal government, state government, or local government in Washington and receives any compensation from such government for working that day. Instead, the Citizens Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials must establish an annual salary for members of the Commission. Commissioners are still eligible for reimbursement for travel expenses incurred while engaged in official business away from their usual place of residence.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 6, 2023.

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