
HOUSE BILL 2294

State of Washington

52nd Legislature

1992 Regular Session

By Representatives Basich, R. King, Wilson, Jones, Sheldon, Orr and Mitchell; by request of Department of Fisheries

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1 AN ACT Relating to commercial crab fishing in coastal waters;
2 adding a new section to chapter 75.30 RCW; creating new sections; and
3 declaring an emergency.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that a significant
6 commercial crab fishery exists in the coastal waters of Washington,
7 Oregon, and California. The legislature finds that the Washington
8 coastal crab fishery represents a separate and distinct fishery from
9 that of the Puget Sound licensing district and that it is limited in
10 quantity. Crab fishing, however, is an attractive alternative to
11 fishers who face increased restrictions on other commercial fisheries
12 of the state and region. The legislature finds that there is potential
13 for an economically distressed and disorderly fishery due to the
14 potential increase in the number of crab fishers. Based upon these

1 circumstances, the legislature needs additional information to
2 determine whether it should make substantial changes in the future
3 management and licensing of the coastal crab fishery, including but not
4 limited to, future restrictions on the number of fishers in the coastal
5 crab fishery.

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 75.30 RCW
7 to read as follows:

8 (1) The department of fisheries, as a member of the Pacific States
9 Marine Fisheries Commission, shall participate, along with the member
10 states of Oregon and California and the coastal crab industry, in a
11 coast-wide study conducted by the Pacific States Marine Fisheries
12 Commission of the Dungeness crab fishery and report upon:

13 (a) The biological status of the coast-wide crab resource;

14 (b) The optimum number of fishers, vessels, licenses, and gear in
15 the coastal crab fishery of each state for purposes of wise use of the
16 resource and orderly management of the coast-wide crab fishery;

17 (c) The number of fishers, vessels, licenses, and the amount of
18 gear currently used in the coast-wide crab fishery;

19 (d) The feasibility of and need for coordinated and concurrent
20 legislative action by the states of Washington, Oregon, and California
21 to manage the Pacific coastal crab resource;

22 (e) Any advantages and disadvantages of establishing future limits
23 on the issuance of new Washington coastal commercial crab fishing
24 licenses under RCW 75.28.130(4) or other limits on entry into the
25 coastal crab fishery; and

26 (f) The potential for increase in the number of or fishing capacity
27 of coastal crab fishers.

1 The department shall submit the results of the study,
2 recommendations of the department, and comments by the industry and the
3 public to the governor and the legislature no later than June 30, 1993.

4 (2) This section does not impose a moratorium on issuance of
5 licenses to allow participation in the coastal crab fishery. After
6 considering the results and recommendations of the study referred to in
7 subsection (1) of this section, the legislature may consider
8 limitations on the issuance of licenses to reduce the number of fishers
9 or vessels, the amount of gear in the coastal crab fishery, and vessel
10 fishing capacity.

11 (3) A fisher or vessel that obtains a license necessary to
12 participate in the coastal crab fishery on and after September 15,
13 1991, is informed that the fisher or vessel may be precluded, at a
14 future date, from participation in the coastal crab fishery. The
15 legislature will review the study described in this section and
16 determine the appropriate course of action to manage the coastal crab
17 fishery. Future legislative action may include restrictions on the
18 issuance of coastal crab licenses to fishers who were not licensed as
19 of the effective date of this act or restrictions of participation of
20 fishers or vessels that have not demonstrated substantial participation
21 in the Washington coastal crab fishery before September 15, 1991.

22 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** Concurrent with the submission of the
23 study referred to in section 2 of this act, the department of fisheries
24 shall provide the legislature with a report indicating the number of
25 new entrants in the Washington coastal crab fishery after September 15,
26 1991. Additionally, the report shall include the date on which the new
27 entrant obtained a coastal crab license and the number and type of
28 additional Washington commercial fishing licenses held by the new
29 entrant.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** This act is necessary for the immediate
2 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the
3 state government and its existing public institutions, and shall take
4 effect immediately.