

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1472

As Reported by House Committee On:
Natural Resources

Title: An act relating to fish and wildlife equipment.

Brief Description: Creating the fish and wildlife equipment fund.

Sponsors: Representatives Buck, Doumit, Sump, Pearson, Eickmeyer, G. Chandler, Rockefeller, Pennington, Jackley, Murray and Haigh.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources: 2/5/01, 2/7/01 [DP].

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Establishes a fish and wildlife equipment fund for the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Doumit, Democratic Co-Chair; Sump, Republican Co-Chair; Pearson, Republican Vice Chair; Rockefeller, Democratic Vice Chair; Buck, G. Chandler, Edwards, Eickmeyer, Ericksen, Jackley, Murray and Pennington.

Staff: Bill Lynch (786-7092).

Background:

The Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Transportation, cities, and counties are each authorized to create and implement an equipment fund. The Department of Natural Resources may expend money from its equipment fund to purchase equipment, machinery, supplies, and repair and maintain equipment, machinery, and supplies. All expenditures from the fund must be reimbursed by the department. All equipment, machinery, and supplies of the department are deemed to have been purchased by the natural resources equipment fund for reimbursement purposes. Although no appropriation is necessary to expend moneys from the equipment

fund, the fund is subject to audit.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife is not authorized to create a revolving fund for equipment. A recent business practices study of the department recommended the establishment of an equipment fund to ensure that there are sufficient funds available to both maintain and replace equipment, and to allow for better tracking of agency costs and purchases.

Summary of Bill:

The fish and wildlife equipment fund is created for use by the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The fund is in the custody of the State Treasurer and operates as a non-appropriated revolving fund.

Expenditures from the fish and wildlife equipment fund may be made for salaries, wages, and operations required for purchasing, repairing, replacing, and operating equipment used for the purposes authorized. The equipment may be used for administration, maintenance, and construction of fish and wildlife lands and facilities; administration and maintenance of lands under the department's control; administration, maintenance, and construction of projects that will enhance fish and wildlife; and administration, biological assessment, and enforcement necessary to carry out the fish and wildlife laws. Projects that will enhance fish and wildlife include volunteer cooperative projects, regional fisheries enhancement group (RFEG) projects, and salmon recovery projects. The department may purchase and sell equipment, materials, and supplies through the fund.

All existing or after-acquired equipment of the department is considered to have been purchased from the fish and wildlife equipment fund. Equipment purchased with general fund appropriations may be transferred into the fish and wildlife equipment fund with or without charging the fish and wildlife equipment fund.

Equipment may be provided to any federal, state, county, city, or governmental agency, volunteer cooperative, RFEG, or entity engaged in salmon recovery. The department may collect a reasonable rental charge for providing the equipment. The terms and charges for the rentals are solely within the discretion of the department of fish and wildlife. The equipment fund must be credited with the proceeds received from rental of the equipment.

RFEGs may keep equipment and materials purchased for less than \$5,000 from an RFEG account without a charge-back on the equipment or materials to the fish and wildlife equipment fund. The department and the RFEG advisory board must develop guidelines regarding these purchases.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 29, 2001.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This would allow greater efficiency for the department. The rental charge imposed for the use of the equipment would help maintain and replace equipment, vehicles, and boats. This bill comes from a recommendation contained in the 1998 study on business practices of the department. The department has over 2400 vehicles, vessels, and equipment that would be subject to the fund. There is currently no orderly schedule for replacing them. The language concerning regional fisheries enhancement group equipment obtained from the department is well-written and was negotiated as part of last year's bill.

Testimony Against: None

Testified: (In support) Willy O'Neil, Association of General Contractors; Jim Lux, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife; and Dawn Vyvyan, Washington Association of Professional Biologists.