

VETO MESSAGE ON SB 5179-S

May 20, 2003

To the Honorable President and Members,
The Senate of the State of Washington

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning herewith, without my approval, Substitute Senate Bill No. 5179 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to body-gripping traps;"

This bill would have provided that a trapping program is in the state's interest and that the sale of pelts is consistent with the Legislature's intent not to waste a wildlife resource. It would have allowed, if permitted by the director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW), use of a body-gripping trap to address animal problems and fur-bearer management needs.

Early this session, I supported legislation that would have addressed the specific problems associated with Initiative 713. This legislation would have allowed the use of traps on moles, gophers and mountain beavers, and provided additional protections for livestock. At that time, I also indicated my opposition to legislation that would repeal the core principles underlying the initiative. Whenever possible, improvements to address unintended consequences of an initiative should be pursued before consideration of a repeal. Because this bill effectively repeals the initiative, even though an alternative legislative solution exists to address the problems of the initiative, I have vetoed the bill in its entirety.

We need to put this issue behind us by looking for ways we can creatively implement solutions, rather than perpetuate problems. With this message, I am requesting members of the Fish and Wildlife Commission to closely oversee DFW's implementation of Initiative 713, consistent with its spirit and intent. Specifically, I would like the Commission to recommend changes to help protect livestock and reduce damage to public property, and to conduct an educational outreach program around the state that explains the availability of the special permit program allowed under Initiative 713. In the meantime, I also would expect that given current financial constraints, DFW would use its limited enforcement resources on higher priorities rather than against homeowners, businesses and the timber industry that have trapped for moles, gophers and mountain beavers. I would like the Commission Chair to provide me with a report in person by December 1, 2003.

For these reasons, I have vetoed Substitute Senate Bill No. 5179 in its entirety.

Respectfully submitted,
Gary Locke
Governor