
**Agriculture & Natural Resources
Committee**

HB 1323

Brief Description: Regarding the sea cucumber dive fishery.

Sponsors: Representatives Lytton, Morris, Blake and Takko.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Extends the expiration of the fees and taxes used to retire sea cucumber dive fishery license until 2016 or until the number of licenses is reduced to 20.
- Requires surcharges collected to be equally divided between remaining permit holders once the number of licenses is reduced to 20.

Hearing Date: 2/6/13

Staff: Cherlyn Walden (786-7296).

Background:

A closed fishery is a fishery with a set number of licenses held by defined participants. The commercial sea cucumber fisheries have been closed since the year 2000. The Director of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is authorized only to issue sea cucumber dive fishery licenses to individuals who held a license for the fishery in the previous year. The issuance of a license to a new applicant is prohibited unless fewer than 20 people are eligible for the license.

Along with closing the sea cucumber commercial fisheries, the WDFW manages a program to buyback, or retire, sea cucumber licenses from qualified participants. The WDFW is required to retire these licenses if the license holder voluntarily agrees to not renew his or her license the following year. The WDFW must retire licenses until the number of fishers participating in the sea cucumber fishery is reduced to 20. When that number is achieved, the money collected from

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the remaining licenses must be used for management and enforcement in the sea cucumber fishery.

A surcharge of \$100 is assessed for a sea cucumber dive fishery license renewal. A surcharge is also assessed if the license holder transfers his or her license to another or designates an alternate operator to fish under his or her license. The surcharges are deposited into the sea cucumber dive fishery account which also receives revenue from specific excise taxes. For sea cucumbers, the commercial fishers are required to pay in tax the value of their harvest multiplied by 4.6 percent, multiplied by the additional tax of 7 percent.

Summary of Bill:

The sea cucumber dive fishery license's surcharge is extended through 2016 or until the number of licenses is reduced to 20, whichever occurs first. The program was scheduled to expire December 31, 2013.

Once the number of sea cucumber dive fishery licenses are reduced to twenty, the surcharges collected and deposited into the sea cucumber dive fishery account will be divided and equally distributed to the remaining licensees.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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