
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5447

State of Washington 60th Legislature 2007 Regular Session

By Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation
(originally sponsored by Senators Hatfield, Jacobsen, Honeyford,
Hargrove, Poulsen, Benton and Rasmussen)

READ FIRST TIME 02/28/07.

1 AN ACT Relating to ensuring a sustainable coastal Dungeness crab
2 fishery; adding a new section to chapter 77.12 RCW; creating a new
3 section; and providing an expiration date.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that the coastal
6 Dungeness crab fishery is one of the most valuable commercial fisheries
7 in Washington state. For example, the 2004-05 season resulted in
8 landings of twenty-one million pounds with an estimated ex-vessel value
9 of over thirty million dollars. The fishery represents a vital
10 economic foundation for many coastal communities.

11 Since 1994, the coastal Dungeness crab fishery has faced
12 significant pressure and has undergone many regulatory changes stemming
13 from issues relating to the sustainability of the resource, the safety
14 and sustainability of the fleet, interstate and federal jurisdiction
15 questions, as well as allocation issues.

16 In order to further promote the sustainability of the coastal
17 Dungeness crab resource, the coastal crab fleet, and coastal
18 communities, the legislature intends to institute a coastal Dungeness
19 buyback program in cooperation with the federal government.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 77.12 RCW
2 to read as follows:

3 (1) The department shall develop a Dungeness crab-coastal fishery
4 buyback program. The program must provide for the purchase and
5 permanent retirement of Dungeness crab-coastal fishery licenses. The
6 department shall design this element of the program with the goal of
7 purchasing between eighty and one hundred Dungeness crab-coastal
8 fishery licenses.

9 (2) In addition to license purchase and retirement, the program may
10 provide for the purchase or retirement of vessels designated on
11 Dungeness crab-coastal fishery licenses.

12 (3) The program must explore funding alternatives that involve
13 federal funding, state funding, funding provided by Dungeness crab-
14 coastal license holders, and combinations thereof.

15 (4)(a) The department must include in the program those elements
16 necessary for the administration of the buyback, including the
17 mechanisms by which Dungeness crab-coastal license holders may apply to
18 participate in the program and by which the department will select
19 licenses or vessels for purchase from among the applicants.

20 (b) The program must include and clearly set forth any conditions
21 that will be placed on Dungeness crab-coastal license holders
22 participating in the program.

23 (5) The program must be designed to have a neutral impact on
24 Dungeness crab harvests in the state and federal waters off the coasts
25 of Oregon and California.

26 (6) Participation by Dungeness crab-coastal license holders in the
27 program is entirely voluntary.

28 (7) The department shall consult with Dungeness crab-coastal
29 license holders when designing the program.

30 (8) To assist the department in the development of the program, the
31 department may contract with persons not employed by the state.

32 (9) By December 1, 2007, the department shall provide a report
33 detailing the program to the appropriate policy and fiscal committees
34 of the senate and house of representatives.

35 (10) The program may not be implemented, and state funds may not be
36 expended, without specific legislative authorization.

1 (11) This section expires June 30, 2010.

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