

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2341

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources, Parks & Shorelines, February 27, 2002

Title: An act relating to controlling game damage to crops.

Brief Description: Attempting to control damage to crops caused by wildlife.

Sponsors: House Committee on Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Representatives Eickmeyer, Grant, Schoesler, Doumit and Jackley).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Parks & Shorelines: 2/25/02, 2/27/02 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS & SHORELINES

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Jacobsen, Chair; Poulsen, Vice Chair; McDonald, Morton, Oke, Snyder, Spanel and Stevens.

Staff: Vic Moon (786-7469)

Background: Wildlife damage to crops is a concern to both farmers and the state. The director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife may pay up to \$10,000 per claim for damages caused to crops by deer or elk. The department on occasion authorizes someone to hunt or haze problem deer or elk in an area where they are causing damage to crops. The department, however, contacts people from a statewide list for this purpose. This means that they do not always use a person who resides within the county to conduct the hunt. People who are not familiar with an area often are not as efficient or successful as persons who are familiar with an area.

Summary of Bill: The Department of Fish and Wildlife must maintain a list of persons holding valid wildlife hunting licenses, arranged by county of residence, who have indicated they are available to hunt deer or elk causing damage to crops. Individuals on the list must meet all the qualifications established by the department. The department must update the list at least once every three years.

The department must use the list when contacting people to help control game damage to crops. The department must make all reasonable efforts to use a resident of the county where the activity occurs before contacting a nonresident of the county. The department must rotate the names on the list in order to provide a fair distribution of the hunting opportunity. Hunters participating in these hunts must report their kills to the department. The department must include a summary of the wildlife harvested in these hunts in its annual game management reports.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Landowners and local hunting experts need to be used as part of the wildlife control when crops are damaged.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Bill Eickmeyer, prime sponsor; Bruce Bjork, Department of Fish and Wildlife; Jim Zimmerman, Cattlemen's Association.