
HOUSE BILL 2110

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2022 Regular Session

By Representatives Walsh and McEntire

1 AN ACT Relating to fish and wildlife enforcement; amending RCW
2 77.04.012; and creating a new section.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** Recognizing the state's significant
5 cultural and economic dependance on a healthy marine environment, the
6 legislature intends to ensure adequate protection of that
7 environment. Despite investments by the legislature to reverse the
8 trend, there has been a noticeable erosion of the department of fish
9 and wildlife's marine law enforcement function, including a decline
10 of fish and wildlife officer presence on marine waters, providing
11 adequate services and resources to the regulated community,
12 maintaining orderly fisheries, and providing a focus on sensitive
13 living marine resources.

14 The intent of the legislature is to: (1) Ensure officers retain
15 subject matter expertise in a complex form of law enforcement; (2)
16 enforce the law with educated and reasonable tolerances; (3) maintain
17 orderly fisheries; (4) ensure the department provides the best
18 services for the regulated community and public at large; and (5)
19 ensure that the department of fish and wildlife carries out fish and
20 wildlife protection priorities consistent with the expectations of
21 the legislature.

1 **Sec. 2.** RCW 77.04.012 and 2000 c 107 s 2 are each amended to
2 read as follows:

3 Wildlife, fish, and shellfish are the property of the state. The
4 commission, director, and the department shall preserve, protect,
5 perpetuate, and manage the wildlife and food fish, game fish, and
6 shellfish in state waters and offshore waters.

7 The department shall conserve the wildlife and food fish, game
8 fish, and shellfish resources in a manner that does not impair the
9 resource. In a manner consistent with this goal, the department shall
10 seek to maintain the economic well-being and stability of the fishing
11 industry in the state. The department shall promote orderly fisheries
12 and shall enhance and improve recreational and commercial fishing in
13 this state.

14 Recognizing that enforcement of fish and wildlife laws is
15 imperative to effective management, the department shall maintain an
16 enforcement program with adequate commissioned law enforcement
17 personnel, funding, and resources.

18 Recognizing that terrestrial and marine operating environments
19 are distinctly different, and to ensure proper allocation of
20 department law enforcement resources, the department shall dedicate
21 no less than 25 percent of the total field deployed officers to
22 marine resource and public safety protection duties, which shall be
23 directed by a dedicated chain of command within the existing
24 structure.

25 The commission may authorize the taking of wildlife, food fish,
26 game fish, and shellfish only at times or places, or in manners or
27 quantities, as in the judgment of the commission does not impair the
28 supply of these resources.

29 The commission shall attempt to maximize the public recreational
30 game fishing and hunting opportunities of all citizens, including
31 juvenile, (~~disabled~~) individuals with disabilities, and senior
32 citizens.

33 Recognizing that the management of our state wildlife, food fish,
34 game fish, and shellfish resources depends heavily on the assistance
35 of volunteers, the department shall work cooperatively with volunteer
36 groups and individuals to achieve the goals of this title to the
37 greatest extent possible.

1 Nothing in this title shall be construed to infringe on the right
2 of a private property owner to control the owner's private property.

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