

2024 Agency Request Legislation



The sharing of confidential data among WDFW and partner agencies is a key element of successful fisheries management on the West Coast. Many fishers participate in multiple fisheries and deliver their catches into more than one state within a year. State and federal law provides confidentiality protection for specific types of information collected by WDFW for boats landing into the state, including for tribal fisheries.

However, these types of information may not receive the same confidentiality treatment if collected in other states. Sharing data among state fisheries management agencies is often necessary to enforce regulations, understand fisheries performance, and analyze the need for and likely effects of potential rule changes. It was recently determined that the Fish and Wildlife section of the Public Records Act does not provide confidentiality protections to other state's managed fisheries. These fisheries include some of the most valuable on the West Coast, such as the Dungeness crab fishery, which are managed individually by the states but benefit from coordinated management and enforcement.

The bill is needed to cover this gap in confidentiality policies. It would amend the existing Fish and Wildlife section of the Public Records Act to provide WDFW with the ability to honor the confidentiality policies of other states. And it would benefit conservation and management by allowing WDFW to effectively engage in interagency fisheries management and enforcement and related activities and to fully participate in collaborative conservation and management with partner agencies from the other states.

This is not a change in current practices. It allows sharing of confidential data to continue in the Pacific States Fisheries Management forum.

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