

[Floor Situation](#) | [Summary](#) | [Background](#) | [Cost](#) | [Staff Contact](#)

[H.R. 2168, West Coast Dungeness Crab Management Act, as amended](#)

FLOOR SITUATION

On Tuesday, October 6, 2015, the House will consider [H.R. 2168](#), *the West Coast Dungeness Crab Management Act, as amended*, under suspension of the rules. H.R. 2168 was introduced on April 30, 2015 by Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler (R-WA) and was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, which ordered the bill reported by unanimous consent on September 10, 2015.

SUMMARY

H.R. 2168 makes permanent an existing fishery management program for Dungeness crabs currently operated by the states of Washington, Oregon and California. The bill maintains the ability of the Secretary of Commerce to assume management of the crab fishery in federal waters.

BACKGROUND

The Dungeness crab, which is native to the Pacific Ocean, has a habitat that stretches from Alaska to Mexico. The commercial and recreational harvest of the crab supports one of the West Coast's most valuable fisheries, "with about 99% of the crab on the U.S. market coming from domestic sources."¹ The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has reported that the harvest of this crab off the coasts of California, Oregon, and Washington "have maintained a cyclical pattern for nearly 50 seasons, ranging from 8 million to 54 million pounds."²

In 1980, the states of California, Oregon, and Washington entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to take "mutually supportive actions" to maintain the fishery within their respective state waters (0 to 3 nautical miles from shore) and in adjacent federal waters (3 to 200 nautical miles from shore). The three states manage the commercial and recreational fishery under this tri-state process.³

¹ See [House Report 114-274](#) at 1.

² Id.

³ Id. at 2.

In 1996, Congress recognized the three-state agreement by granting a one-year authorization. The absence of a federal management plan gives the states increased flexibility to manage the fishery as they jointly determine. Congress has subsequently extended the management authority three times, most recently in 2007. The current authorization expires on September 30, 2016.⁴ H.R. 2168 strikes that sunset provision to permanently extend the authorization “in light of the lengthy and successful state-led management of the crab fishery.”⁵

According to the bill’s sponsor, “fishermen from Washington, Oregon and California are responsibly working together to keep the Dungeness crab fishery healthy and sustainable for future generations. They shouldn’t have to travel to Washington D.C. every few years to plead for the extension of a proven plan that has proven to work for our local economy and the Dungeness fishery.”⁶

COST

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) [estimates](#) that implementing the bill would reduce the need for discretionary appropriations (and associated spending) by \$1 million a year over the 2017 to 2020 period. Enacting the bill would not affect direct spending or revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply.

STAFF CONTACT

For questions or further information please contact [John Huston](#) with the House Republican Policy Committee by email or at 6-5539.

⁴ Id.

⁵ Id.

⁶ See Press Release—“[Cantwell, Herrera Beutler Introduce Dungeness Crab Management Bill](#),” May 1, 2015.