

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESB 5675

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Fisheries & Wildlife*

Title: An act relating to Skagit river salmon.

Brief Description: Requiring a restoration plan for Skagit river salmon.

Sponsor(s): Senators Metcalf, McMullen, Anderson and Bailey.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Fisheries & Wildlife, February 20, 1992, DPA.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
FISHERIES & WILDLIFE**

Majority Report: *Do pass as amended.* Signed by 11 members: Representatives R. King, Chair; Morris, Vice Chair; Wilson, Ranking Minority Member; Fuhrman, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Basich; G. Cole; Haugen; Hochstatter; Orr; Padden; and Spanel.

Staff: Keitlyn Watson (786-7310).

Background: The Skagit River and its major tributaries, the Baker, Sauk and Suiattle Rivers, comprise the largest watershed in the Puget Sound basin. The Department of Fisheries manages salmon in the Skagit River system on the basis of natural production. The department also has an active hatchery program at Marblemount, producing coho salmon, spring, fall, and summer chinook salmon, and chum salmon. In recent years, chum, pink, natural summer/fall chinook, and steelhead returns to the Skagit have been generally healthy and meeting spawning escapement goals. However, the health of natural Skagit coho and spring chinook and hatchery summer/fall chinook has been of concern.

Summary of Amended Bill: The director of the Department of Fisheries is to prepare a salmon recovery plan for the Skagit River. The plan shall include strategies for employing displaced timber workers to conduct salmon restoration and other tasks identified in the plan. The plan shall incorporate the best available technology in order to achieve maximum restoration of depressed salmon

stocks. The plan must encourage the restoration of natural spawning areas and natural rearing of salmon but must not preclude the development of an active hatchery program.

The director shall present the recovery plan to the Legislature on or before December 31, 1992. The plan is to include funding requirements for salmon hatchery programs and natural spawning programs.

Amended Bill Compared to Engrossed Bill: The amended bill removes the requirement that salmon hatchery programs be an important component of the recovery plan. The amended bill adds the requirement that the plan include strategies for employing displaced timber workers to conduct salmon restoration and other tasks identified in the plan.

Fiscal Note: Available. New fiscal note requested February 20, 1992.

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

Testimony For: This is a necessary step to preserve wild salmon runs, and will help to prevent endangered species listings on the Skagit.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Senator Jack Metcalf, prime sponsor; William Ryan, Skagit System Cooperative; and Ed Manary, Department of Fisheries.