

FINAL BILL REPORT

EHJM 4003

Brief Description: Concerning the preservation of salmon.

By Representatives Mastin, Rayburn, Lisk, Sheahan, Grant, Bray, Ludwig, Chandler, Schoesler, Ballard, Foreman, Roland, Edmondson, Lemmon and Hansen.

House Committee on Agriculture & Rural Development
Senate Committee on Energy & Utilities

Background: In December 1991, the federal government listed stocks of Snake River sockeye salmon as being "endangered" under the federal Endangered Species Act. In May 1992, Snake River spring/summer and fall chinook were listed as being "threatened" under the act.

The Northwest Power Planning Council, state and federal agencies, and others have been taking actions to improve fish passage, screening, and other protection facilities in various parts of the Columbia and Snake River basins.

Some proposals for enhancing fish passage involve increasing the water velocities in and near reservoirs. From March 1 through March 31 of last year, the Corps of Engineers conducted a test to examine the effect of reducing reservoir size, or "drawing down" reservoirs, on water velocities and physical structures. The reservoirs behind Lower Granite and Little Goose dams on the lower Snake River were lowered below their minimum operating levels. Navigation through the locks at the dams is precluded at these levels.

Summary: The officials charged with developing the region's salmon recovery plan are requested to consider carefully the biological needs of endangered salmon species and, before drawing down reservoirs below minimum operating pools, give the strongest consideration to the economic impact of such drawdowns on the citizens of this state.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	97	0	
Senate	44	0	(Senate amended)
House	95	2	(House concurred)