

SENATE BILL REPORT

SJM 8006

AS OF FEBRUARY 23, 1993

Brief Description: Concerning the preservation of salmon.

SPONSORS: Senators Loveland, M. Rasmussen, Jesernig, Newhouse, Prince, McCaslin, West, Deccio, Moyer, Barr, Snyder, Hochstatter and Roach

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & UTILITIES

Staff: Phil Moeller (786-7445)

Hearing Dates: February 23, 1993

BACKGROUND:

The Columbia and Snake River System provide the Northwest with numerous economic benefits. Storage dams can provide electrical generating capacity and provide the ability to disperse water throughout the year. Run-of-the-river dams produce a major portion of the electricity generated in the entire region.

These dams also provide other significant benefits. These include flood control, creating pools for irrigation, the ability to use barge navigation, and recreation.

Especially since the 1970's, concern has been raised over the decline in anadromous fish runs in the Columbia and Snake River System. Dams are seen as one of the major factors that have impacted these runs. Some entities favor increasing the velocity of the river flows during the spring to speed the juvenile fish to the ocean. This is done by releasing additional stored water and lowering the level at which water flows over dams, and is known as a "drawdown." The Army Corps of Engineers conducted a test drawdown on the Snake River in March, 1992, to study the impacts of this procedure.

SUMMARY:

The President, the Director of the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, and certain members of Congress are asked to limit any future drawdowns on the Columbia and Snake River System to the minimum operating pool or minimum irrigation pool on the John Day reservoir.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: none requested

