

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1124

As Reported By House Committee On:
Natural Resources

Title: An act relating to the sale of salmon and salmon eggs by the department of fish and wildlife.

Brief Description: Creating the salmon enhancement account.

Sponsors: Representatives Hatfield, Pennington, Basich, Sheldon, Kessler, Blanton and Kremen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources: 1/24/95, 2/7/95 [DP].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Fuhrman, Chairman; Buck, Vice Chairman; Pennington, Vice Chairman; Basich, Ranking Minority Member; Regala, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Beeksma; Cairnes; Elliot; G. Fisher; Jacobsen; Romero; Sheldon; Stevens; B. Thomas and Thompson.

Staff: Rick Anderson (786-7114).

Background: The Department of Fisheries and Wildlife is authorized to sell salmon eggs once its internal hatchery needs have been met. Proceeds from the sale of salmon eggs and salmon carcasses go to the state general fund with two exceptions: 1) Sales of those salmon eggs and carcasses that return to a regional fisheries enhancement group go to that enhancement group; and 2) State law allows (but does not require) proceeds exceeding legislative budget estimates to return to the agency as unanticipated receipts.

Recent Sales History of Surplus Eggs and Carcasses:

General Fund Receipts

1990 - \$637,978.22

1991 - \$704,777.95

1992 - \$361,936.75

1993 - \$292,626.68

Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups

Regional fisheries enhancement groups were authorized in 1989 as non-profit entities to promote volunteer efforts to increase the state's salmon population. In 1990, a dedicated account was created to fund these groups. Funds were originally generated from a \$1 fee on recreational salmon licenses and a \$100 fee on commercial and charter boat licenses. In 1993, legislation expanded the fee base by including the \$1 fee to all food fish licenses. The \$100 commercial fee was also expanded to include salmon delivery licenses. Revenues from the fees are expected to be approximately \$420,000 in 1994.

In addition, enhancement groups receive all revenues from the sale of those salmon eggs and carcasses that return to an enhancement group. After initial sales of \$43,000 in 1991-92, enhancement groups have not collected any revenues from surplus egg sales.

Revenues from fees and sales of eggs and carcasses for Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups are not subject to legislative appropriation.

Summary of Bill: Proceeds from the sale of surplus salmon eggs and carcasses are deposited into a newly created salmon enhancement account instead of the state general fund. Money from the account can only be used for enhancement projects by regional fisheries enhancement groups. Expenditures from the account are subject to legislative appropriation.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect July 1, 1995.

Testimony For: Revenue from the state's natural resources should be used to enhance these resources. Using the revenue from the sale of surplus salmon eggs to fund low-cost, effective non-profit efforts is an excellent way to enhance our national resources.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Brian Hatfield, prime sponsor; Diane Ellison, Chehalis Basin Fisheries Task Force; Steve Gray, Northwest Gillnetters Association; and Les Clark, Northwest Gillnetters Association (all in favor).