

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6324

As Reported By House Committee On:

Natural Resources

Appropriations

Title: An act relating to fish enhancement with remote site incubators.

Brief Description: Rehabilitating salmon and trout populations with a remote site incubator program.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Morton, Rasmussen, Oke, Swecker and West).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources: 2/24/98, 2/27/98 [DP];

Appropriations: 2/28/98 [DPA].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Buck, Chairman; Sump, Vice Chairman; Thompson, Vice Chairman; Regala, Ranking Minority Member; Butler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander; Anderson; Chandler; Eickmeyer; Hatfield and Pennington.

Staff: Bill Lynch (786-7092).

Background: Remote site incubators are a method for reintroducing fish into areas that are not seeded by natural spawning. Remote site incubators also allow for the early period of high mortality of salmonid eggs to be bypassed.

Summary of Bill: The Department of Fish and Wildlife is required to develop a program to use remote site incubators in tributaries to the Columbia River below Bonneville Dam to reestablish self-sustaining populations of coho, chum, and chinook salmon. The program must identify sites which are suitable for this purpose, with the initial selection of sites being completed by July 1, 1999. The department may only approve a remote site incubator project if it is consistent with the conservation of wild salmon and trout.

Volunteer groups are to be used as the primary means of implementing the remote site incubator program. The department may prioritize remote site incubator projects within regional enhancement areas. The department may use its employees to construct remote site incubators, and may purchase remote site incubators.

The director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife and the secretary of the Department of Corrections are required to jointly investigate the possibility of producing remote site incubators through the prison industries program. The two directors are required to report their findings to the natural resource committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives by December 1, 1999.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife is directed to investigate the use of remote site incubator technology for the production of warm water fish. The department must report on the results of the remote site incubator program to the Legislature by December 1, 2000, and provide annual reports on the progress of the program to the Fish and Wildlife Commission.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: This year's bill resolved the differences over provisions in last year's bill. It allows the Department of Fish and Wildlife to meet its responsibilities under the Federal Endangered Species Act. The lower Columbia River is a good place to start this program. Remote site incubators can help re-establish fish runs which are virtually extinct.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Bruce Crawford, Department of Fish and Wildlife.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 31 members: Representatives Huff, Chairman; Alexander, Vice Chairman; Clements, Vice Chairman; Wensman, Vice Chairman; H. Sommers, Ranking Minority Member; Doumit, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Gombosky, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Benson; Carlson; Chopp; Cody; Cooke; Crouse; Dyer; Grant; Keiser; Kenney; Kessler; Lambert; Linville; Lisk; Mastin; McMorris; Parlette; Poulsen; Regala; D. Schmidt; Sehlin; Sheahan; Talcott and Tokuda.

Staff: Jeff Olsen (786-7157).

Summary of Recommendation of Committee on Appropriations Compared to Recommendation of Committee on Natural Resources: The provision limiting the program to tributaries in the lower Columbia River is removed, allowing the program to operate anywhere in the state. A new section was added which makes the bill null and void unless specific funding is provided in the Omnibus Appropriations Act by June 30, 1998.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Testimony For: The remote-site incubator program is an effective tool for the Department of Fish and Wildlife to re-introduce wild stocks in the Columbia River.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Doug Erickson, Department of Fish and Wildlife.