

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

HB 2263

Brief Description: An act relating to the aquatic lands enhancement account.

Background: The Department of Natural Resources manages approximately 2.2 million acres of state-owned aquatic lands. Original title to these lands was established by Article XVII of the state constitution. Aquatic lands are held in trust for all citizens.

Approximately 70 percent of lease revenues from state-owned aquatic lands are deposited into the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA).

ALEA funds are appropriated by the Legislature in both the Operating and Capital budgets. Current statute specifies the funds are to be used for the following:

- 1) aquatic lands enhancement projects,
- 2) the purchase or protection of aquatic lands for public purposes;
- 3) providing and improving access to such lands; and
- 4) volunteer cooperative fish and game projects.

For the last two biennia, the Omnibus Appropriations Act has amended the statute for the period of the biennium, authorizing ALEA funds to be used for two additional purposes:

- 1) shellfish management, enforcement and enhancement, and
- 2) restoration of native wild salmon stock.

Summary: The use of the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account is expanded to include 1) shellfish management, enforcement and enhancement; and 2) restoration of native wild salmon stock.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

