

HOUSE BILL REPORT

2SSB 5120

As Passed House-Amended:

April 14, 1997

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

Brief Description: Providing for fish enhancement with remote site incubators.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senator Morton).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources: 4/1/97, 4/4/97 [DPA].

Floor Activity:

Passed House-Amended: 4/14/97, 97-0.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Buck, Chairman; Sump, Vice Chairman; Thompson, Vice Chairman; Butler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander; Anderson; Chandler; Hatfield; Pennington and Sheldon.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Regala, Ranking Minority Member.

Staff: Rick Anderson (786-7114).

Background: Remote site incubators are a low technology tool designed to incubate trout and salmon eggs in small streams. The department provides technical assistance and project approval for regional fisheries enhancement groups and other volunteer groups who wish to maintain remote site incubators. Current law directs the Department of Fish and Wildlife to coordinate with regional fishery enhancement groups to field test remote site incubators for coho and chinook. The purpose of field tests is to gather scientific evidence to determine the effectiveness of remote site incubators.

Summary of Bill: The Department of Fish and Wildlife is directed to undertake a number of activities to promote the use of remote site incubators.

By July 1, 1998, the department must identify potential sites suitable for remote site incubators. The list of sites must be updated annually. The department must coordinate a remote site incubator program. The department must fully involve volunteer groups in the program and approve projects involving remote site incubators unless the project is a direct threat to salmon.

The department is directed to make every effort to secure and use salmon eggs for remote site incubators. The department must investigate ways to use remote site incubators for warm water fish.

The department is authorized to use staff to construct remote site incubators. The department is directed to buy incubators if it is cheaper than using staff to build them. The department, in conjunction with the Department of Corrections, must investigate the potential of having the prison industries program build remote site incubators. The departments must jointly report the results of the study to the House and Senate natural resource committees by December 1, 1998.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Remote site incubators are an important tool for increasing salmon populations. These incubators also have great potential as an educational tool for school-age children. Jurisdiction of the program is totally within the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The bill is funded in the Senate budget. The department has not done a good job identifying all possible sites suitable for remote site incubators. This bill will help the department do that. The bill will allow the volunteers to do more work with remote site incubators. There are four components to a successful incubator program: siting, installing, maintaining, and evaluating. Agency guidelines should be developed with the volunteer groups to ensure these components are met. Volunteers are critical for implementation of this program. Agency staff should not be responsible for maintaining incubators due to the remoteness of the incubators. New FTEs should be used for the agency's duties under this bill. The siting of incubators should be approved by the tribes. State law requires the tribes and the agency to jointly develop a wild salmon policy. The proposed policy has not been jointly developed.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Bob Morton, prime sponsor; Ric Abbett, Trout Unlimited; Larry Oathout, SPSSEG; Willy O'Neill, Stilly Snohomish Task Force; Laura Overton,

Rural landowner Forestry Coalition; Terry Wright, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (all pro); Bruce Crawford, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife.