

SENATE BILL REPORT

2SSB 5886

As Passed Senate, March 17, 1997

Title: An act relating to the regional fisheries enhancement program.

Brief Description: Providing a stable funding source for fisheries enhancement and habitat restoration.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Strannigan, Swecker, Jacobsen and Oke).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources & Parks: 3/4/97 [DPS-WM].

Ways & Means: 3/10/97 [DP2S].

Passed Senate, 3/17/97, 49-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5886 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Oke, Chair; Rossi, Vice Chair; Hargrove, Jacobsen, Morton, Prentice, Roach, Snyder, Stevens and Swecker.

Staff: Ross Antipa (786-7413)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 5886 be substituted therefor, and the second substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators West, Chair; Strannigan, Vice Chair; Bauer, Fraser, Hochstatter, Kohl, Long, Loveland, McDonald, Roach, Rossi, Schow, Sheldon, Snyder, Spanel, Swecker, Thibaudeau, Winsley and Zarelli.

Staff: Cathy Baker (786-7708)

Background: Regional fisheries enhancement groups were established by the Legislature in 1989 for the purpose of enhancement and restoration of salmon resources. Since that time, regional groups have incorporated, begun ambitious restoration activities, and quickly grown to utilize all available monetary resources.

There is interest in authorizing the regional fisheries enhancement groups to enhance steelhead trout, to expand their funding sources, and to streamline the permits needed for fish enhancement projects.

Summary of Bill: Regional fisheries enhancement groups are authorized to enhance steelhead trout. A surcharge of \$1 is collected on each steelhead license sold, and a surcharge of \$25 is collected on each fishing guide license and anadromous fish buyers license. Funds from these surcharges are deposited in the regional fisheries enhancement group account. It is clarified that the regional fisheries enhancement account may receive federal funds. The regional fisheries enhancement group advisory board must make recommendations for streamlining the permitting process for fish enhancement projects.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 24, 1997.

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

Testimony For (Natural Resources & Parks): Regional groups need additional funding in order to expand their operations to include steelhead trout restoration projects.

Testimony Against (Natural Resources & Parks): None.

Testified (Natural Resources & Parks): Lawrence Oathout, South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group (pro); Al Adams, Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group (pro); John Kelly, King County Outdoor Sports Council (pro); Mike Kuttel, Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (pro); Ric Abbett, Trout Unlimited (pro); Geoff Lebon, Regional Fisheries Enh. Adv. (pro); David Burger, Mid-Puget Sound Fisheries Enhancement Group (pro).

Testimony For (Ways & Means): This bill will increase the resources available to regional enhancement groups. The dollars are well spent and leverage a lot of in-kind donations.

Testimony Against (Ways & Means): None.

Testified (Ways & Means): Willy O'Neil, Stilly Snohomish Fisheries Enhancement Task Force (pro).

House Amendment(s): The surcharge on steelhead licenses and fishing guide licenses is removed. Two new dedicated accounts are created:

- 1) an appropriated account for federal funding and state appropriations to regional enhancement groups,
- 2) a non-appropriated account for gifts and donations to regional enhancement groups.

The study of conflicting permitting requirements for fish enhancement projects is removed. The cooperative habitat incentive program is removed. Authorization for regional groups to enhance steelhead trout is removed. The Department of Fish and Wildlife may provide start-up funds for enhancement projects.