

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1700

As Reported By House Committee On:

Natural Resources

Title: An act relating to regional fisheries enhancement groups.

Brief Description: Requiring the department of fish and wildlife to facilitate groups applying to be regional fisheries enhancement groups.

Sponsors: Representatives Buck, DeBolt, Doumit, Sump, Miloscia, Regala, Radcliff, Barlean, Tokuda, Schoesler, Hatfield, Eickmeyer, Kessler, Mielke, Pennington, Clements, Mastin and Dunn.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources: 2/16/99, 2/19/99 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires the Department of Fish and Wildlife to designate four more regional fisheries enhancement groups in eastern Washington for a total of 16 regional fisheries enhancement groups.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Buck, Republican Co-Chair; Regala, Democratic Co-Chair; Anderson, Democratic Vice Chair; Sump, Republican Vice Chair; G. Chandler; Clements; Doumit; Eickmeyer; Ericksen; Pennington; Rockefeller and Stensen.

Staff: Carole Richmond (786-7114).

Background:

Regional fisheries enhancement groups were authorized by statute in 1989 for the purpose of encouraging organized volunteer efforts to improve anadromous fish populations (chapter 75.50 RCW). These groups must be incorporated as nonprofit organizations and

are eligible for state financial support. The Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Fish and Wildlife Commission are directed to provide these groups with technical assistance. A key goal of the groups is to develop projects to supplement the fishery enhancement capability of the department. Projects are reviewed by the regional offices of the Department of Fish and Wildlife and affected tribes prior to implementation. At present, there are 12 regional fisheries enhancement groups in Washington.

A regional fisheries enhancement group account is created in the custody of the State Treasurer to help defray the costs of operating the groups. The account is funded through surcharges on recreational and commercial fishing licenses.

A regional fisheries enhancement group advisory board is created to make recommendations to the Fish and Wildlife Commission. The board is charged with developing a training and assistance plan for the groups, including developing a clearinghouse of information and a program to provide direct assistance to groups for the solicitation of funds and technical assistance.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The Department of Fish and Wildlife is directed to designate four more regions in eastern Washington as regional fisheries enhancement groups, for a total of 16 groups statewide. The department is also directed to assist prospective groups that apply to become a regional fisheries enhancement group. The advisory board reviews the applications and recommends to the director which group shall be selected as the regional fisheries enhancement group for a region.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill refers to the total number of regional fisheries enhancement groups that are authorized. The bill also omits the purposes for which the four additional regional fisheries enhancement groups are formed in eastern Washington.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: (Original bill) These groups are very effective in leveraging resources. More are needed in eastern Washington.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Nina Carter, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife; Kent Dimmitt, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife; and Willy O’Neill, Mid-Sound Fisheries Enhancement Group.