

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2079

As Reported By House Committee On:

Natural Resources

Title: An act relating to salmon recovery.

Brief Description: Promoting salmon recovery.

Sponsors: Representatives Regala, Buck, Eickmeyer, Anderson, Rockefeller, Romero, Veloria and Keiser.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources: 2/24/99, 3/2/99 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- The critical pathways methodology used in salmon recovery must include a review of monitoring data, an evaluation of project performance, and recommendations to the local committee which compiled the habitat project list.
- Standards are established for the review of habitat projects by the interagency review team when no lead entity has been formed for the area.

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: Bill Lynch (786-7092).

Background:

The Legislature enacted salmon recovery legislation during the 1998 legislative session which, among other provisions, created a critical pathways methodology to ensure salmon restoration activities would be prioritized and implemented in a sequential manner, created an independent science panel to assist in salmon recovery efforts, and an interagency review team to rank and dispense funds for habitat restoration projects.

Although an adaptive management strategy must be used as part of the critical pathways methodology, and the critical pathways methodology requires an identification of how projects will be monitored and evaluated, the critical pathways methodology does not specify that there must be a review of the monitoring data and an evaluation of the project performance. Habitat protection projections funded through conservancy programs are not specifically included as part of a habitat work schedule.

If there is no lead entity for an area, the interagency review team must rank and dispense funds for the area based upon whether there is a greater benefit to salmon recovery and whether it will be implemented in a critical area, but there are no standards for making these determinations listed in statute. The criteria used for ranking projects does not give priority for projects that will benefit critical fish stocks.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The critical pathways methodology must include a review of monitoring data, an evaluation of project performance, and recommendations to the committee which compiled the list of habitat projects for the area as well as the interagency review team. The technical advisory team for the area is responsible for this task.

Vacancies on the independent science panel are filled in the same manner in which the original appointments were filled. The Governor's Salmon Recovery office may enter into a personal services contract with members of the independent science panel for compensation based upon available funding. References to compensating members of the independent science panel in accordance with the rate established for members of class four boards and commissions are deleted.

Representatives of the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation and the Department of Ecology are added to the interagency review team to rank and dispense funds for habitat projects.

Habitat project lists are submitted to the interagency review team for funding once a year instead of twice a year.

If there is a lead entity established for an area, the interagency review team must give preference to projects that are on the project list submitted by the lead entity. If there

is no lead entity for an area, the interagency review team must give preference to projects that are based upon the limiting factors analysis identified for the area, provide greater benefit to salmon recovery based upon information contained in the Department of Fish and Wildlife salmonid stock inventory and any comparable science-based assessment, will be implemented in a more critical area based upon the stock status information contained in the department's salmonid stock inventory and any comparable science-based assessment, and other factors. The interagency review team must give the highest priority to projects that will benefit critical fish stocks when ranking projects for funding.

A lead entity may be designated either through letters of support or by official resolution by counties, cities, and tribal governments. The System Operations Advisory Committee is designated as the lead entity for the Yakima basin.

References to salmon habitat restoration projects are changed to salmon habitat projects to allow the funding of habitat protection projects, habitat projects that improve water quality, habitat projects that protect water quality, habitat-related mitigation projects, fish passage projects, fish screening projects, habitat project corrective maintenance, and monitoring activities.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Habitat protection projects funded by conservancy programs are specifically included on a habitat work schedule. Priority is provided for funding projects that impact critical stocks of fish. A lead entity is designated for the Yakima basin. Technical changes are made.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: (Original Bill) This fixes some minor problems with last year's bill. The process is working well. Adding monitoring and evaluation as part of the critical pathways methodology is important to ensure that adaptive management is used in fish recovery. This bill helps provide greatest return for the money spent. Projects often benefit multiple species. Scientists will be more willing to serve on the independent science panel if personal service contracts are authorized. Putting the Department of Ecology and the Interagency for Outdoor Recreation on the interagency review team will add expertise and access to data bases.

Testimony Against: (Original Bill) The bill could be expanded to allow more pre-planning and assessment funds for areas not participating in watershed planning. The bill

could address uniform criteria for monitoring. A salmon recovery account could be created to handle all state and federal money. Resolutions for creating a lead entity should be retained as an alternative because many tribes adopt resolutions. Deleting references to restoration could open the process up to habitat acquisition.

Testified: (In Support of the Original Bill) Doug Levy, city of Everett; Ed Owens, Commercial fishing; Ron Shultz, Audubon Society; Josh Baldi, Washington Environmental Council; Bill Robinson, Trout Unlimited; Randy Scott, Quinault Indian Nation; and Tim Smith, Department of Fish and Wildlife.

(Neutral on the Original Bill) Paul Parker, Washington Association of Counties.

(Concerns on the Original Bill) Dawn Vyvyan, Yakama Indian Nation; Karla Fullerton, Washington Cattlemen's Association; Kathleen Collins, Washington Water Policy Alliance; and Scott Barr.