

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

HB 1681

Title: An act relating to state purchase of privately grown trout for planting in state waters.

Brief Description: Establishing a program to purchase and plant privately grown trout.

Sponsors: Representatives Buck, Grant, Sump, Schoesler, Boldt, Mastin and McMorris.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Meeting Date: February 16, 1999

Bill Analysis Prepared by: Josh Weiss, Counsel (786-7129)

Background: In 1998 a private Washington-based fish farm supplied 60,000 rainbow trout to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Colville Confederated Tribes, and various fishing and outdoor clubs. These fish were planted in Eastern Washington lakes, but can be planted in any freshwater body that has sufficient water quality to support fish life.

Since the fish are sterile, having been bred with three chromosomes instead of two (triploid), they do not interbreed with wild stocks, and continue to grow throughout their lives. This continued growth and aggressive feeding habits allow the fish to grow much larger than wild stocks, and resulted in the capture of a state record-breaking rainbow trout of 25.45 pounds in February of 1998. At the time of planting the fish ranged between one and two pounds.

These trout are being offered to the state at a price of \$2 per fish.

Summary of Bill: The Fish and Wildlife Commission is required to institute a program to purchase catchable-sized trout from private fish farmers located in Washington. The commission must purchase up to 100,000 trout during the 1999 calendar year, and up to one million trout during the year 2000. These trout are to be purchased for the purpose of improving recreational fishing and are to be planted in public freshwater lakes and ponds.

The Fish and Wildlife Commission may not reduce appropriations to the Department of Fish and Wildlife's operated hatcheries, or reduce the number of hatchery employees in response to the purchase of privately grown trout.

Appropriation: Three million dollars is appropriated to the Department of Fish and Wildlife from the state general fund.

Fiscal Note: Available

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

Rulemaking Authority: None.