

# **HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS**

## **HB 2714**

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**Title:** An act relating to warm water game fish.

**Brief Description:** Designating certain bodies of water as warm water game fish habitat.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Pennington, Mielke and Hatfield.

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### **HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Meeting Date:** February 2, 2000.

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

**Background:**

Warm water game fish in Washington include the sunfish, pike, catfish, and perch families. A 1986 survey concluded that more than half of Washington fishing license holders fished for warm water species. The amount of recreation provided by warm water species in 1986 was second only to trout fishing in lowland lakes, and ahead of steelhead and salmon angling.

The warm water game fish enhancement program was created in 1996 within the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The program was originally funded through a \$5 license surcharge that is required to fish for bass, walleye, channel catfish, tiger musky and crappie. This revenue was to be used exclusively to increase opportunities to fish for warm water game fish and not to be used to replace funding for these programs. In 1998, the Legislature revised the Department of Fish and Wildlife's licensing structure, eliminating all surcharges.

Currently, the department does not specifically designate bodies of water as warm water game fish habitat. In addition, the Salmon Recovery Funding Board is not currently required to consider whether projects are located in warm water game fish habitat when it makes funding decisions.

**Summary of Bill:**

The department is required to specifically designate ponds, lakes, rivers, and streams in the state as warm water game fish habitat. Once a body of water is so designated, it must be managed to increase the opportunities to fish for and catch warm water

game fish. The bill designates specific bodies of water in 19 different counties that must be designated as warm water game fish habitat.

In making funding decisions, the Salmon Recovery Funding Board is required to give lesser preference to projects located in designated warm water game fish habitat.

***Appropriation:*** None.

***Fiscal Note:*** None requested.

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

***Rulemaking Authority:*** None.