

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2079

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation, April 1, 1999
Ways & Means, April 5, 1999

Title: An act relating to salmon recovery.

Brief Description: Promoting salmon recovery.

Sponsors: House Committee on Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Representatives Regala, Buck, Eickmeyer, Anderson, Rockefeller, Romero, Veloria and Keiser).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation: 4/1/99 [DPA-WM].
Ways & Means: 4/5/99 [DPA, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS & RECREATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.
Signed by Senators Jacobsen, Chair; T. Sheldon, Vice Chair; Hargrove, Morton, Oke, Rossi, Snyder, Spanel and Stevens.

Staff: Ross Antipa (786-7413)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Loveland, Chair; Bauer, Vice Chair; Brown, Vice Chair; Fairley, Fraser, Kline, Kohl-Welles, Rasmussen, B. Sheldon, Snyder, Spanel, West, Winsley and Wojahn.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Honeyford and McDonald.

Staff: Kari Guy (786-7437)

Background: Salmon recovery framework legislation was passed in the 1998 legislative session. An implementing structure and multi-step decision making process was adopted.

Concern has arisen over the coordination and accountability for salmon recovery funding.

Summary of Amended Bill: A three-member salmon recovery board is created to allocate funds for salmon recovery needs. Board members must have expertise necessary to provide strong fiscal oversight of salmon-related expenditures. The Governor appoints the board to

staggered four-year terms, subject to confirmation by the Senate. Staffing for the board is provided by the Salmon Recovery Office. Board members are paid \$100 per working day.

The board must emphasize funding for projects which: (1) protect habitat or restore habitat; (2) meet scientific principles; (3) have high fish production potential; (4) preserve genetic diversity; (5) improve habitat; and (6) address near-term risks.

Prior to finalizing funding decisions the board must consult with agriculture, fishing, timber, and government interests.

The board must develop procedures and criteria for allocation of funds, but these procedures may be waived to conform to specific legislative appropriations. The board must track all funds allocated for salmon recovery and water quality projects, and provide a biennial report to the Legislature.

The interagency review team and independent science panel must assist the board. The Department of Ecology is added to the membership of the interagency review team.

A salmon recovery account is created in the state treasury.

Ways & Means Amended Bill Compared to Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation Amended Bill: Changes to the duties of the independent science panel are deleted. The salmon recovery board is created.

Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: Provisions changing the independent science team from a class four board to being compensated by personal service contracts is removed. The lead entity for the Yakima River Basin is not specified.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed, except for Section 9, which takes effect immediately.

Testimony For (Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation): Revisions are needed to the salmon restoration framework adopted in the 1998 session. A larger range of restoration projects need to be authorized. Monitoring of project effectiveness is needed. Projects should be prioritized based on the needs of the most depressed salmon stocks.

Testimony Against (Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation): It is not appropriate to statutorily designate the lead salmon restoration entity for the Yakima River Basin.

Testified (Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation): Max Benitz, Benton Co. (con); Tim Smith, WA Dept. Fish & Wildlife (pro); Ron Shultz, Audubon (pro); Dave Williams, Assn. WA Cities (pro); Dawn Vyvyan, Yakama Nation (con Section 9); Representative Debbie Regala (pro).

Testimony For (Ways & Means): This bill provides an opportunity to spend salmon recovery funds in a manner which will ensure fiscal accountability.

Testimony Against (Ways & Means): Compensation for the independent science panel should be reinstated in the amended bill.

Testified (Ways & Means): PRO: Ron Shultz, National Audubon Society; Tim Smith, Department of Fish and Wildlife; Dick Ducharme, Yakima Growers, Wenatchee Valley Traffic, BIAW; Kathleen Collins, Washington Water Policy Alliance.