

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 3028

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation, February 23, 2000

Title: An act relating to a program for the recovery of fish runs listed under the federal endangered species act.

Brief Description: Establishing a program for the recovery of fish runs listed under the federal endangered species act.

Sponsors: Representatives Mastin and Grant.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Parks & Recreation: 2/23/2000 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS & RECREATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Jacobsen, Chair; T. Sheldon, Vice Chair; Hargrove, Morton, Oke, Rossi, Snyder, Spanel and Stevens.

Staff: Ross Antipa (786-7413)

Background: A number of salmon and steelhead runs are listed as threatened or endangered in the southeastern corner of Washington, known as the Snake River salmon recovery area.

In 1998, House Bill 2496 authorized the formation of lead entities as part of a comprehensive salmon habitat restoration strategy. Lead entities are formed when counties, cities, and tribal governments jointly designate, by resolution or letters of support, the area for which a habitat restoration project list is to be developed and the lead entity that is to be responsible for submitting the habitat list. The lead entity may be a county, city, conservation district, special district, tribal government, or other entity.

The lead entity is required to establish a committee that consists of representative interests. The purpose of the committee is to provide a citizen-based evaluation of the projects proposed to promote salmon habitat restoration. The role of the committee is to compile a list of projects, establish priorities for individual projects, define the sequence in which the projects are to be implemented, and submit the list to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) for funding. The SRFB evaluates project lists from regions throughout the state for annual funding from a pool of available state and federal dollars. As a matter of policy, the SRFB has begun to fund some administrative expenses for lead entities.

Of all the lead entities in the state, only one in Southwest Washington was created under separate state legislation that authorized a pilot project to address steelhead recovery.

Summary of Amended Bill: A program for salmon recovery is established in Walla Walla, Columbia, Garfield, and Asotin counties. A lead entity is created within the Snake River salmon recovery region. The membership of the lead entity is comprised of 18 voting and four nonvoting members. The voting members are represented by two citizen members from each of the four counties in the region; one representative each from the Nez Perce, Yakama, Colville and Umatilla tribes; and one representative each from the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the U.S. Forest Service, the Washington Department of Ecology, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Citizen appointments to the lead entity are made by the counties and must include at least one representation of private property interests, one representing environmental interests, and one representing hydroelectric interests. The Nez Perce, Yakama, Colville and Umatilla tribal representatives are selected by the tribes. The nonvoting members consist of the district manager or designee from each of the four conservation districts serving each of the four counties in the region.

The lead entity is required to approve and prioritize habitat projects and programs related to the recovery of Snake River salmon runs.

The lead entity shall provide a program administrator for the Snake River salmon recovery region lead entity. The lead entity will expire July 1, 2005.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: The membership of the lead entity is increased by three members: one from the Colville Tribe, one from the Yakama Tribe, and one from the National Marine Fisheries Service. Counties must make the citizen appointments and at least one must represent private property interests, one representing environmental interests, and one representing hydroelectric interests. Agency representatives are selected by the agencies. The lead entity is given the authority to hire and fire a program administrator and other staff.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: A regional lead entity is needed for the Snake River Recovery Region. The lead entity currently active in the area is reflected in the original bill. Conservation districts are very active in current salmon recovery planning and activities within the region. Authorizing a pilot project lead entity would allow for a broader-based salmon planning and recovery effort.

Testimony Against: The Yakama and Colville tribes are not included in the original bill and want to be included. Counties desire a larger role in selecting citizen membership for the lead entity. Otherwise, there is little opposition.

Testified: PRO: Representative Mastin, sponsor; Representative Grant, sponsor; Bob Nichols, Governor's Office; Nina Carter, WDFW; CONCERNS: Dawn Vyvyan, Yakama Tribe; Diane Nelson, Colville Tribe.