

Natural Resources Committee

HB 1880

Brief Description: *Creating a pilot program for the protection of salmon spawning beds.*

Sponsors: *Representative Poulsen.*

Brief Summary of Bill

- *Directs the Department of Fish and Wildlife to prohibit activities that harm or disturb salmon spawning beds on the Skagit River.*
- *Requires the Department of Fish and Wildlife to post signs adjacent to known and probable salmon beds and in the main stem and every tributary of the Skagit River informing the public of the salmon nests.*
- *Establishes the provisions of this bill as a pilot program expiring in 2010.*

Hearing Date: *2/23/01*

Staff: *Jason Callahan (786-7117).*

Background:

The Legislature found while enacting the Salmon Enhancement Program that a state of emergency exists in regards to salmon stocks in Washington and immediate action is needed to restore the fishery. The Salmon Enhancement Program was created in 1995 to address this situation. The Salmon Enhancement Program created regional fisheries enhancement groups, the regional fisheries enhancement salmonid account, the fish passage barrier removal task force, the Skagit River salmon recovery plan, and other programs designed to restore the salmon fishery in Washington.

Summary of Bill:

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) is to prohibit activities that harm or disturb salmon spawning beds on the Skagit River, including wading onto the beds, driving or

riding vehicles over the beds, dragging boat anchors through the beds, digging or removing spawning gravel, or otherwise physically disturbing the beds.

The DFW must post signs adjacent to known and probable salmon beds and in the main stem and every tributary of the Skagit River informing the public of the salmon nests and warning of possible penalties. The signs inform users of the river of the prohibited activities and provide warning that a violation of the prohibitions may result in a penalty not less than \$100. The same information must be provided by the DFW in brochures given to individuals applying for fishing and boating licenses and distributed widely in Skagit County.

The requirements of this section constitute a pilot program terminating in 2010. Upon termination, the DFW must report to the legislature on whether there was increase in salmon number directly attributable to the program.

Appropriation: *None.*

Fiscal Note: *Not Requested.*

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