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**Fisheries, Ecology & Parks  
Committee**

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**HB 2920**

**Brief Description:** Allowing the creation of special economic fishery advisory committees.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Pearson, Sump, Mielke, Boldt, Hinkle, Condotta and Buck.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Authorizes the creation of a Special Economic Fishery Advisory Committee (Committee) to review and provide guidance on fishing seasons that accomplish fishery objectives and maximize economic benefits to local communities.
- Directs the Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Fish and Wildlife Commission to work with Committees to evaluate alternative fishing seasons and consider economic impacts to local economies.

**Hearing Date:** 2/5/04

**Staff:** Jeff Olsen (786-7157).

**Background:**

The Washington State Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) has the authority to set seasons for the harvest of food fish and game fish. This authority includes the ability to establish the times and places when the taking of fish is lawful.

For salmon and steelhead, however, a larger and more complex management framework exists. Salmon and steelhead are managed in cooperation with the federal government, treaty tribes, Canada, and other states through several forums. Through the Pacific Salmon Commission and the Pacific Fisheries Management Council, annual salmon fisheries levels for Washington are established. State harvest must be consistent with these levels. The 1974 federal court case *U.S. v. Washington* (Boldt Decision) re-affirmed tribal rights to harvest salmon and steelhead and established them as co-managers of Washington fisheries. In Washington, the North of Falcon process and the Columbia River Compact are used to allocate fisheries in state waters. These fisheries must also be consistent with the federal Endangered Species Act in areas where listings occur.

The Department of Ecology has defined 62 water resource inventory areas (WRIA) for the purposes of watershed management. The Department of Fish and Wildlife develops fishing rules for marine areas, freshwater, and special rules for rivers and lakes.

**Summary of Bill:**

Recreational fishing stakeholders within a WRIA or multiple WRIsAs may form a Special Economic Fishery Advisory Committee (Committee). A Committees must have at least 5 and no more than 15 members representing a balance of recreational fishers, sportfishing organizations, and local business owners. A Committee may review and provide guidance on proposed recreational fishing seasons and advise the Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) of significant economic impacts to local economies of proposed fishing seasons. The Committee may work with the Department and the Commission to develop alternative fishing seasons that accomplish fishery management objectives and maximize economic benefits to local communities.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.