

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## 2SHB 1076

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation, March 22, 2007

**Title:** An act relating to rockfish research.

**Brief Description:** Creating a rockfish research program.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Blake, Takko, B. Sullivan and Moeller).

**Brief History:** Passed House: 3/07/07, 86-9.

**Committee Activity:** Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation: 3/21/07, 3/22/07 [DPA-WM, DNP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Jacobsen, Chair; Rockefeller, Vice Chair; Morton, Ranking Minority Member; Fraser, Hargrove, Poulsen, Spanel and Swecker.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Stevens.

**Staff:** Kim Johnson (786-7346)

**Background:** The term rockfish generally includes a number of species of long-lived, bottom-dwelling fish. Like all fishery resources in Washington, the management of the rockfish resource and rockfish fisheries has been delegated to the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW). DFW has taken various actions, including adopting fishing limitations, to manage the rockfish fishery in response to concerns that many rockfish populations are currently at a level lower than what is generally considered healthy.

DFW issues various licences, and combinations of licenses, for both commercial and recreational fishing. In addition to license fees, which raise revenue for general DFW programs and the general fund, some licenses also require the payment of a surcharge upon purchase or renewal. A surcharge is an additional cost above the fee for the license that is usually earmarked for a specific purpose. For instance, certain shellfish licenses carry a surcharge that raises revenue specifically to fund testing and monitoring for biotoxins.

**Summary of Second Substitute Bill:** DFW is required to develop and implement a program that will research and conduct a stock assessment of the rockfish populations in the state. The

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required research includes surveys in both the Puget Sound and coastal waters using new and existing technologies. The surveys must estimate the current abundance and future recovery of species of rockfish and other groundfish.

The required rockfish research is funded through a series of surcharges on licenses offered by the DFW. Surcharges on commercial licenses are set at \$35. This surcharge applies to the annual fee established for both salmon and non-salmon charter licenses, and to the annual fee for non-limited entry delivery licenses.

In addition, a series of licenses are assigned a surcharge of 50 cents. This surcharge applies to recreational saltwater and combination fishing licenses, as well as to temporary combination fishing licenses.

The revenue generated from the surcharges are to be deposited into the newly created Rockfish Research Account (Account). The Account is unappropriated and expenditures may only be authorized by the Director of DFW. The revenue in the Account may be used only for rockfish research, including assessment of stocks.

**EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY RECOMMENDED AMENDMENT(S) AS PASSED COMMITTEE (Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation):** The expiration date is removed.

The stock assessment must include an examination of whether marine fish enhancement is appropriate. DFW is required to report to the Legislature on a biennial basis on the status of the stock assessment and research program.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on March 15, 2007.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: DFW needs funds to research the yellow eye and canary rockfish as these stocks and others are restricted and commercial fishing is non-existent due to the declining stocks. Monitoring changes in the populations will allow for selective fishing in future years. The regulated community supports keeping this surcharge and not having an expiration date to have a pool of funds to support research of stock populations.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative Blake, prime sponsor; Ed Owens, Coalition of Coastal Fisheries, Westport and Ilwaco Charter Boat Fleets; Morris Barker, DFW.