

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5224

As Amended by House, April 17, 2007

Title: An act relating to the salmon recovery office.

Brief Description: Concerning the governor's salmon recovery office.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation (originally sponsored by Senators Jacobsen, Rockefeller and Kilmer; by request of Office of Financial Management).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation: 1/17/07, 2/15/07 [DPS-WM, w/oRec].

Ways & Means: 2/27/07, 3/05/07 [DPS(NROR)].

Passed Senate: 3/13/07, 44-2.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5224 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

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

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Stevens.

Staff: Kim Johnson (786-7346)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5224 as recommended by Committee on Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair, Capital Budget Chair; Pridemore, Vice Chair, Operating Budget; Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Carrell, Fairley, Hatfield, Hewitt, Hobbs, Honeyford, Keiser, Kohl-Welles, Oemig, Parlette, Rasmussen, Regala, Roach, Rockefeller, Schoesler and Tom.

Staff: Kirstan Arestad (786-7708)

Background: The Governor's Salmon Recovery Office (GSRO) was created in the Governor's office in 1998. The purpose of GSRO is to coordinate and assist the development

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of regional salmon recovery plans for evolutionary significant units (ESU), and to gather and submit those plans to federal agencies in response to the Endangered Species Act. GSRO is scheduled to sunset on June 30, 2007.

Five regional organizations have formed to address salmon recovery on an ESU scale. The Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board is currently the only regional recovery organization created in statute. The other four regional entities include: the Puget Sound Shared Strategy, the Yakima Sub-basin Fish and Wildlife Planning Board, The Snake River Salmon Recovery Board, and the Upper Columbia Salmon Board. Regional recovery groups are in the process of completing salmon recovery plans and submitting those plans for federal approval.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The expiration date for the GSRO is removed.

The primary purpose of the GSRO is expanded to provide coordination and assistance for the implementation and revision of regional salmon recovery plans.

The GSRO is required to work with regional salmon recovery organizations to ensure a coordinated and consistent statewide approach to salmon recovery. The GSRO is also required to review agency budget requests related to the salmon recovery and watershed health and make recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature in order to prioritize and integrate budget requests across agencies.

The Governor's Monitoring Forum is codified and is renamed the Forum on Monitoring Salmon Recovery and Watershed Health.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Ecology, Department of Natural Resources, State Conservation Commission, and the Forum on Monitoring Salmon Recovery and Watershed Health are required to provide to the GSRO requested information necessary to prepare the state of the salmon report and other reports produced by the Office.

References to the Independent Science Panel are removed and replaced with the Washington Academy of Sciences, and the Governor is authorized to request that the Academy impanel an independent science panel on salmon recovery to respond to requests for review made by the GSRO.

The GSRO is authorized to prepare a time line and implementation plan that identifies specific actions in regional recovery plans for state agency action and the necessary level of assistance to implement local and regional recovery plans.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill contains several effective dates. Please refer to the bill.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill (Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation): PRO: The creation of the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office was in response to the listing of several fish species in Washington as endangered, the need for coordination with local, state, and federal level bodies, and to assist in the development of the local and regional salmon recovery plans. Great progress has occurred over the years, and the bulk of

the planning work has been finished. The focus now shifts to five tasks: implementation; monitoring; continuing coordination with the federal government and other states; coordinating with the salmon recovery funding board; and continuing the reporting function.

The continuation of this office is essential if we are serious about recovering these species. It will take a coordinated effort and meaningful involvement of the local watersheds to have any kind of success in recovery. The office will play a key role in continuing to build upon the relationships that were established throughout the planning process as we move into the implementation phase.

Persons Testifying (Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation): PRO: Bill Ruckelshaus, Salmon Recovery Funding Board; Bob Nichols, Governor's Salmon Recovery Office.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means): OTHER: We ask that if this body decides to pass the bill out of this committee, that they would include funding as proposed in the Governor's budget.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): OTHER: Jim Cahill, Office of Financial Management.

House Amendment(s): An expiration date of June 30, 2015, is provided for the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office and the Forum on Monitoring Salmon Recovery and Watershed Health.