

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5421

As of February 2, 2009

Title: An act relating to creating the upper Columbia river recreational salmon and steelhead pilot stamp program.

Brief Description: Establishing the upper Columbia river recreational salmon and steelhead pilot stamp program.

Sponsors: Senators Parlette, Jacobsen, Rockefeller, Swecker, Hargrove, Shin and Marr.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation: 2/02/09.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION

Staff: Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

Background: Role of the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) serves as manager of the state's fish and wildlife resources. Among other duties, DFW must classify wildlife and establish the basic rules and regulations governing the time, place, manner, and methods used to harvest or enjoy fish and wildlife.

Fishing Licenses. All individuals 15 years old and older are required to purchase a personal use fishing license prior to recreationally fishing for or possessing fish. There are a number of personal use fishing licenses available, including a freshwater license, saltwater license, and combination license.

Stamp, Permit, and Surcharge Programs. In various instances, the Legislature has provided a dedicated funding source for specific fish and wildlife management activities by requiring stamps, permits, or surcharges in addition to a hunting or fishing license. For example, generally a hunter must purchase a small game license as well as a migratory bird validation to hunt for migratory birds. Revenues from the migratory bird validation are then used for various purposes including migratory bird protection and habitat improvement.

Summary of Bill: DFW must create an Upper Columbia River Recreational Salmon and Steelhead Pilot Stamp Program (Program). The stated purpose of the Program is to supplement the resources available to DFW to carry out those activities necessary to provide

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recreational salmon and steelhead fishing opportunities in the Upper Columbia River and its tributaries.

Program funding comes from a \$15 stamp required for persons fishing recreationally for salmon and steelhead on the Upper Columbia River and its tributaries. A person must obtain a stamp in addition to a fishing license. Stamp revenues go into a dedicated non-appropriated account used to fund Program activities. Administrative costs of the Program may not exceed 15 percent of annual receipts to the account.

DFW must administer the Program in consultation with an advisory body consisting of representatives from established recreational fishing organizations of the Upper Columbia River. The advisory body must make annual recommendations regarding Program expenditures, and DFW must provide an explanation for any expenditures that substantially differ from such recommendations.

The term "Upper Columbia River" is defined. By September 1, 2009, DFW must develop a list of tributaries to the Upper Columbia where a stamp is required to fish recreationally.

In 2015 DFW and the advisory body must recommend to the Legislature whether the Program should be continued.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

[OFM requested ten-year cost projection pursuant to I-960.]

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill is all about recreational anglers fiscally helping DFW to support fishing opportunities, thereby helping the angler's themselves. Recreational fishing opportunities have increased on the upper Columbia. But, with the current economic crisis, anglers are worried that such opportunities may continue into the future. Selective fisheries offer a valuable tool to increase fishing opportunity while also conserving the resource. Recreational fishers are willing to spend their own resources to provide these fisheries.

OTHER: The upper Columbia contains two federally-listed fish, but great improvements have been made towards recovery and providing recreational fisheries. DFW feels that providing recreational fishing is a high priority. However, there are significant startup costs involved to begin and develop this stamp program. DFW has concerns about the possible fiscal impacts, and whether the stamp revenues would cover these initial costs.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Parlette, prime sponsor; Rollie Schmitten, citizen; Robert Stroup, Icicle Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited; Ric Abbett, Washington Council of Trout Unlimited; Paul Sparks, Olympia Chapter of Trout Unlimited.

OTHER: Bill Tweit, Heather Bartlett, DFW.