

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESSB 5421

As Passed Senate, April 25, 2009

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

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

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation (originally sponsored by Senators Parlette, Jacobsen, Rockefeller, Swecker, Hargrove, Shin and Marr).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation: 2/02/09, 2/23/09 [DPS-WM, w/oRec].

Ways & Means: 3/02/09 [DPS(NROR), DNP, w/oRec].

Passed Senate: 4/25/09, 38-11.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5421 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Jacobsen, Chair; Ranker, Vice Chair; Fraser, Hatfield and Swecker.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Morton, Ranking Minority Member; Stevens.

Staff: Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5421 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; Tom, Vice Chair, Operating Budget; Brandland, Fairley, Hobbs, Keiser, Kline, Kohl-Welles, McDermott, Murray, Oemig, Parlette, Pridemore, Regala and Rockefeller.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Signed by Senator Hewitt.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Carrell, Honeyford and Schoesler.

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 Engrossed Substitute Bill: DFW must create a 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 recreational salmon and steelhead fishing opportunities on the Columbia River and its tributaries.

Program funding comes from a \$7.50 stamp or endorsement required for persons fishing recreationally for salmon and steelhead on the Columbia River and its tributaries. A person must obtain a stamp or endorsement in addition to a fishing license. DFW must determine whether to issue stamps or endorsements based on which will result in the least administrative costs. Stamp revenues go into a dedicated nonappropriated account used to fund Program activities.

DFW must administer the Program in consultation with an advisory body representing the geographic areas and established recreational fishing organizations of the Columbia River. In selecting advisory body members, DFW must solicit recommendations from recreational fishing organizations of the Columbia River and give deference to those recommendations. 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 "Columbia River" is defined. By September 1, 2009, DFW must develop a list of tributaries to the Columbia where a stamp is required to fish recreationally and must determine whether it will issue stamps or endorsements.

By December 1, 2014, DFW and the advisory body must recommend to the Legislature whether the Program should be continued. The Program expires June 30, 2016.

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 (Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation): 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 (Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation): PRO: Senator Parlette, prime sponsor; Rollie Schmitt, 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.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means): PRO: This bill requires anyone who would fish recreationally for salmon and steelhead in the Columbia River to pay an additional \$7.50 when they purchase a fishing license. This additional fee will pay for the pilot program contained in this bill and the remainder will go to DFW. This version of the bill addresses the previous fiscal concerns of DFW and is supported by recreational anglers who fish the Columbia River and its tributaries. These individuals support imposing the fee on themselves to help DFW maintain selective fisheries on the Columbia River. These fisheries target hatchery fish while avoiding wild stocks that could be easily overfished. The bill will require more monitoring, evaluation, and enforcement to ensure that the strict conservation standards are met. This program will result in continued economic opportunity and activity in the Columbia River basin.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): PRO: Senator Parlette, prime sponsor; Ric Abbett, Trout Unlimited; Bill Tweit, DFW.