

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6738

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation, February 3, 2010

Title: An act relating to the sale of surplus salmon from state hatcheries.

Brief Description: Concerning the sale of surplus salmon from state hatcheries.

Sponsors: Senators Kilmer and Jacobsen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation: 2/01/10, 2/03/10 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6738 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Jacobsen, Chair; Ranker, Vice Chair; Morton, Ranking Minority Member; Fraser, Hatfield, Stevens and Swecker.

Staff: Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

Background: Role of the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW). 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.

Surplus Hatchery Salmon. DFW operates approximately 90 hatchery facilities, with about 70 facilities dedicated to salmon or steelhead production, and 20 dedicated to trout and other game fish. Surplus salmon are salmon that return to a hatchery in excess of the number needed to produce the next generation of hatchery fish.

Statute specifically authorizes DFW to give salmon and carcasses to state institutions, schools, or economically depressed people. The state may also sell surplus salmon from hatcheries, and if so must require the purchaser to process and reserve a portion for state institutions and economically depressed individuals.

Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups (RFEG). An RFEG is a local, incorporated, non-profit organization relying primarily on volunteer efforts to enhance salmon resources and

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develop projects designed to aid the fishery enhancement capability of DFW. Fourteen such groups have been formed. RFEGs receive funds from recreational and commercial licensing fees. Additionally, DFW distributes revenues from the sale of surplus hatchery salmon among the RFEGs.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute): DFW must work with appropriate stakeholders in order to facilitate the disposition of surplus salmon in order to best utilize the resource, enhance revenue to RFEGs, and enhance the provision of nutrients to food banks. Stakeholders included in the discussion must include, at minimum, RFEGs, food banks, disposal contractors, commercial and recreational fishers, tribes, and commercial aquaculture.

By November 1, 2010, DFW must provide the Legislature with a summary of the discussion, outcomes, and any legislative recommendations. DFW must conduct the required stakeholder work within existing funds.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute): All language in the original bill is removed, and is replaced with the language directing DFW to work with stakeholders on specified issues relating to the disposition of surplus salmon.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on June 1, 2010.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: PRO: The goals of surplus salmon disposal are to return nutrients to the environment and provide funding for RFEGs. There is room to improve the method by which the state contracts for surplus salmon disposal. There are ways to produce more revenues to support RFEGs; for example, by better utilizing salmon roe. Although food banks raise concerns, DFW would maintain control of how much fish is distributed. Stakeholders have started discussing the issues and feel it best to continue discussing the issue over the interim.

OTHER: There are concerns that altering the current successful surplus salmon disposal mechanism could cause issues. These could include problems maintaining the valuable distribution of fish and fish products to food banks. It is not as lucrative as some think to have to collect and dispose of all hatchery surplus fish. Stakeholders have started discussing the issues, and feel it best to continue discussing the issue over the interim.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Paul Ancich, RFEG Coalition; Neil Werner, Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group; Terry Willis, Grays Harbor County Commisisoner; Tony Meyer, Lower Columbia RFEG; Terry Wright, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission; Ed Owens, Coalition of Coastal Fisheries.

OTHER: Jack Field, Washington Fish Growers Assn.; Nello Picinich, Coastal Conservation Assn.; Josh Fogt, Northwest Harvest; Chuck Johnson, American Canadian; Chris Van Dyke, Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement and Harvest Assn.; Heather Bartlett, DFW.