

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5739

As of February 6, 2015

Title: An act relating to salmon and steelhead spawning beds.

Brief Description: Protecting salmon and steelhead spawning beds.

Sponsors: Senator Chase.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources & Parks: 2/05/15.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Staff: Bonnie Kim (786-7316)

Background: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). WDFW manages the state's fish and wildlife resources. Among other duties, WDFW must preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage fish and wildlife, including establishing the time, place, manner, and methods used to harvest or enjoy fish and wildlife.

Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA). An HPA is required for any project that will use, divert, obstruct, or change the natural flow or bed of any of the salt or fresh waters of the state. WDFW issues HPAs to ensure the proper protection of fish life.

Summary of Bill: WDFW must prohibit activities that harm or disturb spawning beds of salmon, steelhead, and other fish on rivers and streams where spawning activities occur. Some examples of potentially harmful activities specified in the bill include wading on spawning beds, driving motor vehicles on spawning beds, the use of high-powered jet or propeller-driven boats across spawning beds, dragging anchors through spawning beds, and digging or removing gravel from spawning beds.

WDFW must determine the time periods for which the activities are prohibited and work cooperatively with tribal co-managers for all fish resources in implementing and enforcing these requirements. WDFW must also provide informational brochures about the prohibited activities to fish and boat license applicants and to those likely to participate in outdoor recreation.

Engaging in a prohibited activity is a natural resources infraction.

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.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: When fish spawn they deposit their eggs in clean gravel beds but fishermen wade through the streams and sometimes they crush the eggs. WDFW published a brochure to educate fisherman but we still see the practice happening. The brochure was not good enough. There should be a penalty provision added to the bill.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Chase, prime sponsor; John Jovanovich, Fishing Industry.