

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6274

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources & Parks, January 27, 2016

Title: An act relating to the Columbia river recreational salmon and steelhead endorsement program.

Brief Description: Concerning the Columbia river recreational salmon and steelhead endorsement program.

Sponsors: Senators Parlette, Takko, Pearson, Rolfes, Hargrove, Schoesler, Becker, Warnick and Hewitt.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources & Parks: 1/21/16, 1/27/16 [DP-WM, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Pearson, Chair; Dansel, Vice Chair; Jayapal, Ranking Member; Fraser, Hewitt and Warnick.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Chase.

Staff: Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

Background: Columbia River Recreational Salmon and Steelhead Pilot Stamp Program (Program) Generally. In 2009, the Legislature passed ESSB 5421 which directed the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) to create the Program to continue and, to the maximum extent possible, increase recreational selective fishing opportunities on the Columbia River and its tributaries. The Program provides funding to supplement resources available to carry out monitoring, permitting, enforcement, and other actions necessary to provide these fishing opportunities.

Program Funding. Program funding comes from an endorsement required for persons fishing recreationally for salmon and steelhead on the Columbia River and its tributaries. A person must obtain an endorsement in addition to a fishing license. The statutory fee for an

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endorsement is generally \$7.50, but is discounted to \$6.00 for seniors and youth. Endorsement revenues are approximately \$1.5 million per year.

Program Advisory Board. DFW administers the Program in consultation with an advisory body known as the Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Anglers Board (Anglers Board), which represents the geographic areas and established recreational fishing organizations of the Columbia River. The Anglers Board must make annual recommendations to DFW regarding Program expenditures, and DFW must provide an explanation for any expenditures that substantially differ from the recommendations.

Scheduled Program Expiration. The statutory authority for the Program expires June 30, 2016.

Summary of Bill: Extends the Program for Six Additional Years. The Program is authorized for an additional six years, with a final report due December 1, 2020, and the Program scheduled to expire on June 30, 2022.

Makes Several Changes to the Program.

- Modifies the statute to reflect the name commonly used for the Program, which is the Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Endorsement Program.
- Directs DFW to maintain updated project information on its website, with a final report and recommendations due prior to the next scheduled expiration of the Program.
- Requires development of a process that allows individuals and organizations to submit project proposals for review and consideration by the Anglers Board. DFW and the Anglers Board must develop the process by December 1, 2016.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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: There is lots of support for this program, which provides benefit to all. The goal here is to extend this successful program that has received cooperation in project funding across different parts of the Columbia and its tributaries. The additional fishing opportunity has resulted in significant economic benefits. Recreational fishers have provided these funds in addition to base license fees, and this has helped sustain fishing opportunity in tough economic times. A potential item to consider is whether to allow for a reduced daily rate of \$2.50 or \$3.

OTHER: There are concerns about the Fish and Wildlife Commission and Legislature's oversight of the Department. The agency has had issues with financial management in the past and this issue must be examined.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Parlette, prime sponsor; CARL BURKE, FISH NorthWest, NSIA AND PUGET SOUND ANGLERS; Dave Graybill, Trout Unlimited; Kelly Cunningham, Department of Fish and Wildlife; Ed Wickersham, Coastal Conservation Association.

OTHER: Arthur West, citizen.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.