

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5947

As of June 29, 2017

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

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

Sponsors: Senator Pearson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources & Parks: 6/21/17 [DP-WM].
Ways & Means: 6/30/17.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Extends the statutory authority for the Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Endorsement Program by an additional two years, to June 30, 2019.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.
Signed by Senators Pearson, Chair; Hawkins, Vice Chair; McCoy.

Staff: Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Staff: Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

Background: Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Endorsement Program (Program). In 2009, the Legislature established the Program, which is administered by the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW). The statutory purpose of the program is 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.

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.

Program Funding and Expenditures. 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 base fee for an endorsement is generally \$7.50, but is discounted to \$6.00 for seniors and youth. Endorsement revenues are deposited in a non-appropriated account, and amount to approximately \$1.5 million per year.

DFW administers the Program in consultation with an advisory board, which represents the geographic areas and established recreational fishing organizations of the Columbia River. The advisory board must make annual recommendations to DFW regarding Program expenditures.

Scheduled Program Expiration. The Legislature originally set the statutory authority for the Program to expire on June 30, 2016. In 2016, the Legislature extended this authorization by one year to June 30, 2017.

Summary of Bill: The Program is authorized for an additional two years, with the Program scheduled to expire on June 30, 2019.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Natural Resources & Parks): PRO: The Program was created after DFW indicated it did not have enough funding to maintain key recreational fisheries in eastern Washington. This was a great concern for user groups, who worked to self-fund this Program to fund the activities needed to keep and grow these fisheries. The result has been a major success story that should be continued, with DFW and fishers working cooperatively to determine key activities to fund. Without the funds from this Program, many key recreational fisheries would not occur.

Persons Testifying (Natural Resources & Parks): PRO: Senator Kirk Pearson, Prime Sponsor; Carl Burke, NSIA and Fish Northwest; Scott Sigmon, Coastal Conservation Association; Bill Clarke, Trout Unlimited; Kelly Cunningham, Deputy Assistant Director/WDFW-Fish Program; David Knutzen, citizen.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Natural Resources & Parks): No one.