

RCW 77.95.100 Regional fisheries enhancement groups—Start-up funds. The department may provide start-up funds to regional fisheries enhancement groups for costs associated with any enhancement project. The commission shall develop guidelines for providing funds to the regional fisheries enhancement groups. [2010 1st sp.s. c 7 s 82; 2000 c 107 s 107; 1997 c 389 s 2. Formerly RCW 75.50.105.]

Effective date—2010 1st sp.s. c 26; 2010 1st sp.s. c 7: See note following RCW 43.03.027.

Findings—1997 c 389: "(1) The legislature finds that:

(a) Currently, many of the salmon stocks on the Washington coast and in Puget Sound are severely depressed and may soon be listed under the federal endangered species act.

(b) Immediate action is needed to reverse the severe decline of this resource and ensure its very survival.

(c) The cooperation and participation of private landowners is crucial in efforts to restore and enhance salmon populations.

(d) Regional fisheries enhancement groups have been exceptionally successful in their efforts to work with private landowners to restore and enhance salmon habitat on private lands.

(e) State funding for regional fisheries enhancement groups has been declining and is a significant limitation to current fisheries enhancement and habitat restoration efforts.

(f) Therefore, a stable funding source is essential to the success of the regional enhancement groups and their efforts to work cooperatively with private landowners to restore salmon resources.

(2) The legislature further finds that:

(a) The increasing population and continued development throughout the state, and the transportation system needed to serve this growth, have exacerbated problems associated with culverts, creating barriers to fish passage.

(b) These barriers obstruct habitat and have resulted in reduced production and survival of anadromous and resident fish at a time when salmonid stocks continue to decline.

(c) Current state laws do not appropriately direct resources for the correction of fish passage obstructions related to transportation facilities.

(d) Current fish passage management efforts related to transportation projects lack necessary coordination on a watershed, regional, and statewide basis, have inadequate funding, and fail to maximize use of available resources.

(e) Therefore, the legislature finds that the department of transportation and the department of fish and wildlife should work with state, tribal, local government, and volunteer entities to develop a coordinated, watershed-based fish passage barrier removal program." [1997 c 389 s 1.]