RCW 77.95.200 Remote site incubator program—Reports to the fish and wildlife commission. (1) The department shall develop and implement a program utilizing remote site incubators in Washington state. The program shall identify sites in tributaries that are suitable for reestablishing self-sustaining, locally adapted populations of coho, chum, or chinook salmon. The initial selection of sites shall be updated annually.

(2) The department may only approve a remote site incubator project if the department deems it is consistent with the conservation of wild salmon and trout. The department shall only utilize appropriate salmonid eggs in remote site incubators, and may acquire eggs by gift or purchase.

(3) The department shall depend chiefly upon volunteer efforts to implement the remote site incubator program through volunteer cooperative projects and the regional fisheries enhancement groups. The department may prioritize remote site incubator projects within regional enhancement areas.

(4) The department may purchase remote site incubators and may use agency employees to construct remote site incubators.

(5) The department shall investigate the use of the remote site incubator technology for the production of warm water fish.

(6) Annual reports on the progress of the program shall be provided to the fish and wildlife commission. [2009 c 333 s 29; 1998 c 251 s 2. Formerly RCW 75.50.190.]

Finding—1998 c 251: "The legislature finds that trout and salmon populations are depleted in many state waters. Restoration of these populations to a healthy status requires improved protection of these species and their habitats. However, in some instances restoration of self-sustaining populations also requires the reintroduction of the fish into their native habitat.

Remote site incubators have been shown to be a cost-effective means of bypassing the early period of high mortality experienced by salmonid eggs that are naturally spawned in streams. In addition, remote site incubators provide an efficient method for reintroduction of fish into areas that are not seeded by natural spawning. The technology for remote site incubators is well developed, and their application is easily accomplished in a wide variety of habitat by persons with a moderate level of training.

It is a goal of the remote site incubator program to assist the reestablishment of wild salmon and trout populations that are self-sustaining through natural spawning. In other cases, where the habitat has been permanently damaged and natural populations cannot sustain themselves, the remote site incubator program may become a cost-effective long-term solution for supplementation of fish populations." [1998 c 251 s 1.]