
**Agriculture & Natural Resources
Committee**

HB 2696

Brief Description: Regarding a proposal for a new permit-only salmonid fishery for the Columbia river.

Sponsors: Representatives Blake, Takko, Chandler, Liias, Kretz, Dunshee, Kristiansen, Williams and McCune.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Fish and Wildlife to develop a legislative proposal that would authorize a permit-only commercial salmonid fishery in the lower portion of the Columbia River promoting the harvest of hatchery-origin fish while minimizing mortality to wild fish.
- Requires the Department of Fish and Wildlife to authorize an experimental fishery to gather data and insight to support the legislative proposal they are directed to deliver.

Hearing Date: 1/19/10

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is authorized to conduct experimental or trial emerging commercial fisheries [RCW 77.65.400]. An emerging commercial fishery is one that allows for the commercial taking of a newly classified fish, a formally classified fish with a new gear type, or a formally classified fish in a new geographic area. Trial emerging fisheries allow for an unlimited number of participants, and experimental emerging fisheries allow the WDFW to limit the number of authorized participants.

If the WDFW authorizes an experimental emerging fishery with limited participation, a five-person advisory board must be established [RCW 77.70.160]. The members of the advisory

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board must be representative of the fishery and serve to make recommendations to the WDFW regarding the number and qualifications of those allowed to participate in the fishery.

Summary of Bill:

The WDFW is directed to develop a legislative proposal for consideration by the 2012 legislature that would authorize a permit-only commercial salmonid fishery in the lower portion of the Columbia River. The new fishery would allow for a fishing gear type that is currently not authorized and that promotes the harvest of hatchery-origin fish while minimizing mortality to wild endangered or threatened fish that are not successfully meeting recovery management objectives. An experimental fishery is to be used by the WDFW to gather data and insight in support of the legislative proposal they are directed to deliver by no later than November 21, 2011. No new gear types may be allowed by the WDFW for salmon fishing on the Columbia River outside of the experimental fishery until the legislative proposal process is concluded.

The WDFW must coordinate a steering committee to assist with the development of the legislative proposal composed of licensed commercial Columbia River salmon fishers. In addition, the WDFW may invite the participation of representatives of tribal government, the state of Oregon, and qualified private citizens. If the state of Oregon agrees to participate, the WDFW must include their designee as a full partner in the research and attempt to pose research questions that are useful for unified management efforts between the two states.

The WDFW must deliver a legislative proposal and an accompanying report. The report is required to include a number of elements. These elements include an explanation of the process used, an assessment of the effectiveness and mortality rates of the recommended new gear types, an assessment of cost to the fishery participants and likelihood of economic success with any new gear type, an approximation of additional hatchery fish that could be harvested with the new gear type, the identification of remaining barriers to implementation, and as assessment of the economic impact on the affected local communities.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.