

HOUSE BILL REPORT

2SSB 5157

As Reported By House Committee On:
Natural Resources

Title: An act relating to conspicuous external marking of hatchery produced chinook salmon and coho salmon.

Brief Description: Providing for conspicuous external marking of hatchery produced chinook salmon and coho salmon.

Sponsors: By Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Owen, Drew, Sutherland, Hargrove, Oke and Haugen).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources: 3/24/95, 3/28/95 [DP].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Fuhrman, Chairman; Buck, Vice Chairman; Pennington, Vice Chairman; Basich, Ranking Minority Member; Regala, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Beeksma; Cairnes; Elliot; G. Fisher; Jacobsen; Romero; Sheldon; Stevens and Thompson.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative B. Thomas.

Staff: Linda Byers (786-7129).

Background: A number of different interests are concerned with the status of wild salmon stocks and curtailments in salmon fishing. One management strategy under consideration to address some of these concerns is to mark hatchery fish and then regulate for the selective harvest of these marked fish, while at the same time allowing for the release of unmarked fish.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife has already introduced this concept into its management of steelhead. In weighing the policy decision of whether to expand this management strategy to other stocks, policy makers may want to consider a number of different factors, including which stocks to mark, when to begin a marking

program, the effects of various options on commercial and recreational fishing, and how to coordinate with other state, federal, tribal, and Canadian fishery managers.

Summary of Bill: The Department of Fish and Wildlife is directed to mark appropriate coho and chinook salmon that are to be released from department-operated hatcheries and rearing ponds, beginning with the marking of the 1994 Puget Sound coho brood. The department is to coordinate with other entities that are producing hatchery coho and chinook for release into public waters.

The department is to adopt rules to control the mixed stock coho and chinook fisheries of the state to sustain healthy stocks of wild salmon, to allow the maximum survival of wild salmon, to allow for spatially separated fisheries that target hatchery stocks, to foster the best techniques for release of wild salmon, and to contribute to the economic viability of the fishing businesses of the state.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void if not funded in the budget.

Testimony For: If we want to continue fishing, we need to have a marking program. When fish return to Washington, they return as a mixed stock fishery; if there's an endangered species in there, there's no fishing. There will be more listings in the future; without marking, there will be no fisheries. Someone has to take the lead and force the option. Washington should do this even if the others don't agree yet. The department has been excited about the idea since 1993 but there were many questions to be answered. The technicians have now resolved the problems about coho, and we are ready to go. Marking is an important tool, but remember that it doesn't create a single fish. We can't wait; we must do this now. We must bear these costs now so that all user groups benefit down the road. The expenditure is a bargain, and there's a human side to the equation too.

Testimony With Concerns: The department would prefer to begin with the 1995 coho brood. There is a concern about the marking of fish from supplementation hatcheries. There is a concern about starting this marking program before there is a coastwide agreement in place.

Testified: Senator Brad Owen, prime sponsor; Bob Turner, Department of Fish and Wildlife; Bob Reid, Friends of the Cowlitz; Jack Swanberg, Northwest Marine Trade Association; Herbert Shepard, Charter Boat Association of Puget Sound (all in favor); Dave Arbaugh, Washington PUD Association; and Dawn Vyvyan (both with concerns).