

5327-S

Sponsor(s): Senate Committee on Natural Resources & Parks  
(originally sponsored by Senators Hargrove, Morton, Loveland,  
Rossi, Stevens, Snyder and Oke)

Brief Title: Creating a habitat incentive program through the  
department of fish and wildlife.

**SB 5327-S - DIGEST**

(DIGEST AS ENACTED)

Directs the department of fish and wildlife and the department of natural resources to jointly initiate a habitat incentives program in two phases. In creating this program, the departments shall make use of and complement other study efforts underway relating to habitat protection and enhancement, including the department of fish and wildlife's review of the hydraulic project approval process and the forestry module under development for the forest practices board dealing with practices within riparian areas.

Directs the departments to work with affected federally recognized Indian tribes, landowners, the regional fisheries enhancement groups, the timber, fish, and wildlife cooperators, and other interested parties to identify appropriate criteria and other factors necessary for implementation of the habitat incentives program.

Provides that the departments and the interested parties may identify and propose solutions to other issues necessary in order to implement the habitat incentives program. The departments and the interested parties shall report to the legislature on their findings as well as on any other recommendations for implementation and funding for the habitat incentives program by December 1, 1997.

Provides that, beginning in January 1998, the department of fish and wildlife and the department of natural resources shall implement a habitat incentives program based on the recommendations of the parties.

Declares that the program shall allow a private landowner to enter into an agreement with the departments to enhance habitat on the landowner's property for food fish, game fish, or other wildlife species. In exchange, the landowner shall receive state regulatory certainty with regard to future applications for hydraulic project approval or a forest practices permit on the property covered by the agreement.

Makes appropriations to carry out the purposes of the act.