

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 3028

As Reported By House Committee On:
Natural Resources

Title: An act relating to a program for the recovery of fish runs listed under the federal endangered species act.

Brief Description: Establishing a program for the recovery of fish runs listed under the federal endangered species act.

Sponsors: Representatives Mastin and Grant.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources: 2/4/00 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates a lead entity in Southeast Washington for the recovery of fish runs listed under the federal Endangered Species Act.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Buck, Republican Co-Chair; Regala, Democratic Co-Chair; Anderson, Democratic Vice Chair; Sump, Republican Vice Chair; Clements; Doumit; Eickmeyer; Ericksen; Pennington and Stensen.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Rockefeller.

Staff: Carole Richmond (786-7114).

Background:

As elsewhere in Washington, a number of salmon and steelhead runs are listed as threatened or endangered in the southeastern corner of Washington, known as the Snake River salmon recovery area.

In 1998, House Bill 2496 authorized the formation of lead entities as part of a comprehensive salmon habitat restoration strategy. Lead entities are formed when counties, cities, and tribal governments jointly designate, by official resolution, the area for which a habitat restoration project list is to be developed and the lead entity that is to be responsible for submitting the habitat list. The lead entity may be a county, city, conservation district, special district, tribal government, or other entity.

The lead entity is required to establish a committee that consists of representative interests. The purpose of the committee is to provide a citizen-based evaluation of the projects proposed to promote salmon habitat restoration. The role of the committee is to compile a list of projects, establish priorities for individual projects, define the sequence in which the projects are to be implemented, and submit the list to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) for funding. The SRFB evaluates project lists from regions throughout the state for annual funding from a pool of available state and federal dollars. As a matter of policy, the SRFB has begun to fund some administrative expenses for lead entities.

Of all the lead entities in the state, only one in Southwest Washington was created under separate state legislation that authorized a pilot project to address steelhead recovery.

Summary of Bill:

A program for salmon recovery is established in Walla Walla, Columbia, Garfield, and Asotin counties. A lead entity is created within the Snake River salmon recovery region. The membership of the lead entity is comprised of voting and nonvoting members. The voting members are represented by two citizen members from each of the four counties in the region; one representative each from the Nez Perce and Umatilla tribes; and one representative each from the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service, the U.S. Forest Service, the Washington Department of Ecology, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. The nonvoting members consist of the district manager or designee from each of the four conservation districts serving each of the four counties in the region.

The lead entity is required to approve and prioritize habitat projects and programs related to the recovery of Snake River salmon runs.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: There is a need for legislative recognition for our efforts because we are dealing with interstate issues. In addition, with endangered species status, there is a danger of a "taking" under section 9 of the Endangered Species Act and, therefore, the National Marine Fisheries Service will scrutinize the region's efforts.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Mastin and Representative Grant (co-sponsors).