

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESB 5355

As Reported by House Committee On:
Natural Resources, Ecology & Parks

Title: An act relating to salmon and steelhead recovery.

Brief Description: Modifying provisions for salmon and steelhead recovery in the lower Columbia region.

Sponsors: Senators Doumit, Zarelli and Jacobsen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources, Ecology & Parks: 3/18/05, 4/1/05 [DP].

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill

- Extends the management board created to implement the Lower Columbia Steelhead Conservation Initiative from July 1, 2006 to July 1, 2010.
- Expands the program for steelhead recovery in the Lower Columbia to include salmon.
- Adds developing and overseeing implementation of a salmon and steelhead recovery plan to the responsibilities of the management board.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, ECOLOGY & PARKS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives B. Sullivan, Chair; Upthegrove, Vice Chair; Blake, Dickerson, Eickmeyer, Hunt and Williams.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Buck, Ranking Minority Member; Kretz, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; DeBolt and Orcutt.

Staff: Jeff Olsen (786-7157).

Background:

In 1998, the Legislature created a pilot program for steelhead recovery in Southwest Washington. This pilot program established a management board for the area designated as evolutionarily significant unit four by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries covering Clark, Cowlitz, Lewis, Skamania, and Wahkiakum counties. This pilot program is scheduled to terminate on July 1, 2006.

The management board, also known as the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board (LCFRB), is responsible for implementing the habitat portion of the Lower Columbia Steelhead Conservation Initiative approved by the state and NOAA Fisheries. The LCFRB reports its progress on a quarterly basis to the legislative bodies of the five participating counties. On December 15, 2004, the LCFRB submitted a plan to NOAA Fisheries as a recovery plan for salmon and steelhead.

The management board consists of the following 15 voting members: A county commissioner from each of the five participating counties; one state legislator elected from one of the legislative districts in the area covered; a representative of the Cowlitz Tribe; one representative of the cities located in the area covered; one representative of hydro utilities; one representative of the environmental community who resides in the area; and five representatives of private property interests. The chair of the board is selected from among the five county commissioners or designees and the legislator on the board.

Summary of Bill:

The management board created to implement the steelhead recovery program for Southwest Washington, also known as the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board, (LCFRB) is extended until July 1, 2010. The LCFRB program is expanded to include salmon, and the LCFRB responsibilities include developing and overseeing the implementation of the salmon and steelhead recovery plan. The evolutionarily significant unit (ESU) four is renamed the Lower Columbia ESU. The chair of the LCFRB is selected from among the members of the management board by the five county commissioners and the legislator on the board.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: The Lower Columbia Fish Board (Board), established in statute, was created by local governments in the region. The Board acts as a lead entity for salmon recovery, as a lead agency for watershed planning, and developed a subbasin recovery plan for the Northwest Power Planning Council. The Board also recently completed the first regional salmon recovery plan. The Lower Columbia is through planning and now needs to implement those plans.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Jeff Breckel, Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.