

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5610

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

Title: An act relating to salmon recovery and watershed health.

Brief Description: Promoting salmon recovery on a regionwide basis.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation (originally sponsored by Senator Jacobsen).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources, Ecology & Parks: 3/22/05, 4/1/05 [DPA].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill
(As Amended by House Committee)**

- Extends the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office (GSRO) from June 30, 2006, until June 30, 2015.
- Establishes regional salmon recovery organizations in Puget Sound, Yakima basin, the Upper Columbia, and the Snake River.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, ECOLOGY & PARKS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 10 members: Representatives B. Sullivan, Chair; Upthegrove, Vice Chair; Buck, Ranking Minority Member; Blake, DeBolt, Dickerson, Eickmeyer, Hunt, Orcutt and Williams.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Kretz, Assistant Ranking Minority Member.

Staff: Jeff Olsen (786-7157).

Background:

Salmon Recovery Planning (ESHB 2496, Chapter 246, Laws of 1998)

The Salmon Recovery Act of 1998 established several new provisions including the creation of the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office, the requirement for a biennial State of the Salmon Report, an Independent Science Panel, the creation of local salmon recovery groups or "lead

entities," and an Interagency Review Team to disperse funds for habitat restoration projects. Currently, there are 27 lead entities organizations in Washington.

The Salmon Recovery Act established technical advisory groups at the Conservation Commission to identify the limiting factors for salmon.

Salmon Recovery Funding (2ESSB 5595, Chapter 13, Laws of 1999, 1st Spec. Sess.)

The Salmon Recovery Funding Act of 1999 primarily established the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) within the Interagency Office for Outdoor Recreation (IAC), but also included several other salmon recovery provisions. The SRFB makes grants for salmon habitat projects and salmon recovery activities pursuant to legislative appropriation. The IAC provides grant and loan administration assistance to the SRFB. The SRFB must develop procedures and criteria for allocating funds on a statewide basis to address the highest priorities for salmon habitat protection and restoration.

Regional Salmon Recovery Organizations

Five regional organizations have formed to address salmon recovery on an Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU) scale. Two regional recovery organizations have been created statutorily, the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board, and the Snake River Salmon Recovery Board. The other three regional entities include the Puget Sound Shared Strategy, the Yakima Sub-basin Fish and Wildlife Planning Board, and the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board. Regional recovery groups are in the process of completing regional salmon recovery plans. When completed, the plans will contain strategies to address habitat, harvest, hatchery, and hydropower activities for recovering salmon populations within the region.

Watershed Health and Monitoring (SSB 5637, Chapter 298, Laws of 2001)

The Watershed Health Monitoring and Assessment Act of 2001 established a Monitoring Oversight Committee (MOC) to review the progress of watershed-related monitoring and make recommendations. The MOC consisted of natural resource agencies with the Director of the GSRO and the Chair of the SRFB serving as the co-chairs. Several areas were specified for the MOC to address when developing the monitoring strategy and action plan including the standardization of monitoring protocols for salmon recovery and watershed health, integration of monitoring information into decision-making, recommending stable sources of funding, as well as other factors. In addition, the MOC is required to recommend organizational and governance structures for oversight and implementation of the coordinated monitoring framework, and identify administrative actions that will be undertaken by state agencies to implement elements of the coordinated monitoring program.

Governor's Forum on Monitoring Salmon Recovery and Watershed Health

On July 12, 2004, the Governor issued an Executive Order creating the Governor's Forum on Monitoring Salmon Recovery and Watershed Health. The Forum must make recommendations on biennial reporting of monitoring results and progress in watershed health and salmon recovery. The Forum must also develop a broad set of measures that will convey

results and progress on salmon recovery and watershed health in ways that are easily understood by the public, legislators, and Congress.

Summary of Amended Bill:

Legislative intent is established to develop and implement salmon recovery activities through strong watershed-based local and regional recovery plans. Regional salmon recovery organizations are defined as entities formed for the purpose of recovering salmon that are either created statutorily or recognized by the Salmon Recovery Office. Salmon recovery regions are defined as geographic areas that encompass watersheds with common stocks of salmon that are generally consistent with the areas identified by the federal fish services.

The GSRO is extended from June 30, 2006, until June 30, 2015. The duties of GSRO are expanded to include assisting regional recovery organizations in submitting plans to the federal fish services for adoption as federal recovery plans. In addition, the GSRO may assist state agencies and others in obtaining federal assurances under the Endangered Species Act.

The Governor's salmon report is continued through December 1, 2012, and additional considerations are added including recommendations for funding for recovery activities. The report must also summarize monitoring data coordinated by the monitoring forum.

The Salmon Recovery Funding Board may provide grants to regional recovery organizations to implement salmon recovery activities.

The Monitoring Oversight Committee established in 2001, technical advisory groups created under the Conservation Commission to conduct limiting factors analysis, and requirements for the Independent Science Panel to provide recommendations on monitoring are repealed.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill:

The amended bill removes the Forum on Monitoring Salmon Recovery and Watershed Health. The amended bill removes references to depressed stocks, candidate species and anticipated listing from the Salmon Recovery Strategy.

The amended bill establishes Salmon Recovery Regions and removes authority for the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office to recognize these regions.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: (In support) The bill continues state support for salmon recovery, with a focus on implementing plans on the ground. Important reporting functions continue and the

bill includes a mechanism to recognize regional organizations. Important functions of the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office will continue, and so will the work of the monitoring forum. The bill clarifies roles and responsibilities and provides balance.

(With concerns) There is some concern that the Governor has the discretion to recognize regional recovery organization, but may choose not to recognize some regional groups.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Jeff Breckel, Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board; Jim Kramer, Shared Strategy for Puget Sound; Doug Osterman, Lead Entity Advisory Group; Jim Fox, Interagency Committee on Outdoor Recreation and Salmon Recovery Funding Board; Bob Nichols, Governor's Salmon Recovery Office; and Tim Smith, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

(With concerns) Debby Hyde, Pierce County Special Projects; and John Stuhlmiller, Farm Bureau.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.