

**WSR 21-11-094**  
**PREPROPOSAL STATEMENT OF INQUIRY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF**  
**FISH AND WILDLIFE**

[Filed May 19, 2021, 9:01 a.m.]

Subject of Possible Rule Making: The agency is considering adopting rules to modify the nontreaty commercial salmon fisheries in the Columbia River.

Statutes Authorizing the Agency to Adopt Rules on this Subject: RCW 77.12.047, 77.65.400, 77.70.160, 77.75.010.

Reasons Why Rules on this Subject may be Needed and What They Might Accomplish: The Washington state fish and wildlife commission's Columbia River policy supports the development of alternative gears for use in nontreaty commercial fisheries. The department is considering the new regulatory options of designating an emerging commercial fishery in the Lower Columbia River to allow currently prohibited gears such as seines and pound nets (RCW 77.50.030) to be used commercially to harvest salmon on the Lower Columbia River. This could include the approval of an emerging commercial fishery and a voluntary license buyback program. The license buyback program would support a more viable fishery for license holders by reducing the total number of Columbia River commercial gillnet licenses. It could better align fishing capacity with resource availability and fishing opportunity.

Other Federal and State Agencies that Regulate this Subject and the Process Coordinating the Rule with These Agencies: These rules would expand the types of gears available for commercial harvesting of salmon in the Columbia River and reduce the number of Washington nontreaty commercial licenses participating in the Columbia River gillnet fishery. The parties to the *U.S. v. Oregon* Management Agreement jointly manage harvest of salmon and steelhead throughout most of the Columbia River and its tributaries, and we plan to share our progress on our rule making with the parties of *U.S. v. Oregon*. Washington also coordinates Columbia River fisheries with the state of Oregon under the Columbia River Compact. RCW 77.75.010.

Interested parties can participate in the decision to adopt the new rule and formulation of the proposed rule before publication by contacting Charlene Hurst, 5525 South 11th Street, Ridgefield, WA 98642, phone 360-605-5247, email questions Charlene.hurst@dfw.wa.gov, email comments 24193@PublicInput.com.

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