

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1035

As Reported by House Committee On:

Natural Resources

Title: An act relating to the management board created to implement the habitat portion of the lower Columbia steelhead conservation initiative.

Brief Description: Extending a program of steelhead recovery in certain counties.

Sponsors: Representative Pennington.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources: 1/24/01, 1/26/01 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

The management board created to implement the Lower Columbia Steelhead Conservation Initiative is extended to July 1, 2006.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Doumit, Democratic Co-Chair; Sump, Republican Co-Chair; Pearson, Republican Vice Chair; Rockefeller, Democratic Vice Chair; Buck, Eickmeyer, Ericksen, G. Chandler, Jackley, Murray and Pennington.

Staff: Bill Lynch (786-7092).

Background:

In 1998 the Legislature created a pilot program for steelhead recovery in southwestern Washington. This pilot program established a management board for the area designated as evolutionarily significant unit 4 by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), covering Clark, Cowlitz, Lewis, Skamania, and Wahkiakum counties.

The management board is responsible for assisting in the development of a recovery plan and for implementing the habitat portions of the Lower Columbia Steelhead Conservation Initiative approved by the state and NMFS. The management board is also authorized to

address other aquatic species listed under the Endangered Species Act. The management board acts as both a lead entity and a committee for purposes of applying for salmon habitat grants from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board.

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 board is required to appoint and consult with a technical advisory committee.

This pilot program is designated to terminate on July 1, 2002.

Summary of Bill:

The management board created to implement the steelhead recovery program for southwestern Washington is extended until July 1, 2006. References to the program being a pilot program are deleted.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 16, 2001.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on August 1, 2001.

Testimony For: This has been a very successful pilot program that covers five and one-half WRIAs. The board has been able to integrate fish recovery planning, watershed planning, factors affecting the decline of fish, and habitat restoration projects in a coordinated and comprehensive way. There are four species of fish in the region listed under the federal Endangered Species Act, and there are two more species proposed for listing. The board is developing a coordinated strategy that allows all of these species to be addressed in a comprehensive manner, rather than separate fragmented plans for each species. There is good representation of the various interest groups on the management board, and the board is very involved and active in working to bring various groups together to get the necessary work done. The number of volunteers that participate on projects far exceed the minimum requirements of the Salmon Recovery Funding Board. This board has been held out as a model by the National Marine Fisheries Service to regional groups in Oregon. The management board is advised by an 18 member technical advisory committee that includes experts in fish biology, hydrogeology, and natural resource management, as well as representatives of federal natural resource agencies. The board is on track to deliver a first edition of the recovery strategy for the

region by mid 2002. Extending the duration of the board sends a strong message to the various federal agencies and other participants that this group will continue its commitment for fish recovery in the region.

Testimony Against: None

Testified: (Support) Leevan Tussenbrook, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife; and Phil Trask, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.