H-2174.1

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**HOUSE BILL 2027**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**State of Washington 67th Legislature 2022 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Fitzgibbon, Chapman, and Tharinger

AN ACT Relating to the governance structure of the department of fish and wildlife; adding a new section to chapter 77.04 RCW; creating a new section; and providing an expiration date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature intends to convene a task force to provide recommendations to the legislature for the establishment of a new governance structure for the department of fish and wildlife, including restructuring or potentially eliminating the fish and wildlife commission. The legislature finds that collaborative, effective, accountable, and science-based administration of the duties of the department of fish and wildlife is necessary in order to better preserve, protect, and perpetuate the fish and wildlife species of the state and to better balance commercial and recreational uses with protection of the biodiversity and natural heritage of the state.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 77.04 RCW to read as follows:

(1)(a) A joint legislative task force on governance of the department of fish and wildlife is established, with members as provided in this subsection.

(i) The president of the senate shall appoint one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the senate.

(ii) The speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the house of representatives.

(iii) The president of the senate and the speaker of the house of representatives jointly shall appoint one member representing each of the following entities:

(A) Hunters;

(B) Recreational fishers;

(C) Commercial fishers;

(D) The outdoor recreation industry;

(E) An organization focused on wildlife conservation;

(F) An organization focused on land conservation;

(G) An organization focused on marine fisheries conservation, freshwater fisheries conservation, or both;

(H) The agricultural business community;

(I) The business community;

(J) County government; and

(K) City government.

(iv) The governor, speaker of the house of representatives, and president of the senate shall jointly invite two members from federally recognized Indian tribes with treaty reserved rights in the state of Washington to participate in the task force.

(v) The governor shall appoint one member representing the department of fish and wildlife, one member representing the office of the governor, and one current or former member of the fish and wildlife commission to the task force.

(b) The president of the senate and the speaker of the house of representatives shall jointly appoint cochairs of the task force from among the members appointed to the task force. The appointed cochairs shall convene the initial meeting of the task force.

(2) The task force shall:

(a) Review options to restructure or eliminate the fish and wildlife commission and provide recommendations for a new governance structure for the department of fish and wildlife; and

(b) Consider changes to the mandate of the department of fish and wildlife and the fish and wildlife commission established in RCW 77.04.012.

(3) The senate committee services, the house of representative's office of program research, the office of the governor, and the department of fish and wildlife shall provide staff support to the task force.

(4) Legislative members of the task force are reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW 44.04.120. Nonlegislative members are not entitled to be reimbursed for travel expenses if they are elected officials or are participating on behalf of an employer, governmental entity, or other organization. Any reimbursement for other nonlegislative members is subject to chapter 43.03 RCW.

(5) The expenses of the task force shall be paid jointly by the senate and the house of representatives. Task force expenditures are subject to approval by the senate facilities and operations committee and the house of representatives executive rules committee, or their successor committees.

(6) The task force shall report its findings and recommendations to the appropriate committees of the legislature by December 1, 2022.

(7) This section expires July 1, 2025.

**--- END ---**