

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1653

As Reported by House Committee On:
State Government & Tribal Relations

Title: An act relating to improving statewide coordination in support of anadromous fish recovery.

Brief Description: Improving statewide coordination in support of anadromous fish recovery.

Sponsors: Representatives Lekanoff, Chapman, Ryu, Ramel and Pollet.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government & Tribal Relations: 1/20/22, 1/26/22 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Creates the Salmon Advisory Cabinet to convene agency directors, legislators, and tribal leaders in order to develop recommendations regarding agency actions, legislation, and budget priorities to enhance salmon and steelhead recovery.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL RELATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Valdez, Chair; Lekanoff, Vice Chair; Dolan and Gregerson.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Volz, Ranking Minority Member; Walsh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Graham.

Staff: Jason Zolle (786-7124).

Background:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Anadromous Fish Management.

Several species of salmon, as well as Puget Sound steelhead trout, are listed as either threatened or endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is responsible for managing the state's fish and wildlife resources. Other state agencies are responsible for various other issues that relate to salmon recovery: for example, water quality, land management, and fish passage barrier removal. Those agencies include the Department of Ecology (Ecology), the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT).

The Governor's Salmon Recovery Office.

The Governor's Salmon Recovery Office (SRO) is responsible for coordinating the statewide strategy for salmon recovery to healthy, sustainable population levels. A primary purpose of the office is to coordinate and assist in the development, implementation, and revision of regional salmon recovery plans. These regional plans are an integral part of the strategy for a coordinated and consistent statewide approach to salmon recovery.

For administrative purposes, the SRO is located within the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO).

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The Salmon Advisory Cabinet.

A Salmon Advisory Cabinet (Cabinet) is established to:

- improve the coordination and understanding of the factors that influence salmon and steelhead recovery;
- consider existing efforts and needs in all areas that influence salmon and steelhead recovery, in order to identify gaps; and
- develop recommendations to be submitted to the Governor and the Legislature regarding agency actions, legislation, and budget priorities to enhance salmon and steelhead recovery.

The members of the Cabinet are as follows:

- the Director of the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs, who chairs the committee;
- tribal leaders with interests and treaty rights in Washington;
- the Director of WDFW;
- the Director of DNR;
- the Director of Ecology;
- the Director of the Puget Sound Partnership;
- the Director of WSDOT;
- the Director of the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation;
- the Director of the RCO;
- the Director of the State Conservation Commission;

- the Director of the Department of Agriculture;
- the Director of the Parks and Recreation Commission;
- the Director of the Department of Health;
- four legislators—one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the House of Representatives and the Senate; and
- two representatives of cities and counties, appointed by the Governor.

The Cabinet must meet twice per year. Its first report to the Governor and Legislature containing recommendations regarding anadromous fish recovery is due October 1, 2022, and subsequent reports are due by June 1 and December 1 of each year.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill removes the new tasks assigned to the SRO, and it removes provisions reassigning the SRO from the RCO to the Office of the Governor for administrative purposes.

The substitute bill makes several changes to the Salmon Cabinet, including:

- changing its name to the Salmon Advisory Cabinet;
- changing its specified purposes; and
- changing its membership by removing some agencies and adding others, while also opening up tribal membership from one federally recognized tribe on each side of the crest of the Cascade Mountains, to any tribal leaders with interests and treaty rights within Washington.

The substitute bill removes provisions that require many state agencies to interpret their responsibilities in a manner that is supportive of the state anadromous fish protection and recovery goals.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) As the state has seen agencies pull together and collaborate on salmon recovery, one thing has been missing. They all have similar goals, but none of the goals reflect what is necessary to co-manage salmon. The state spends billions of dollars on salmon recovery with multiple agencies. For example, Ecology focuses on clean water and sediment, while the WDFW focuses on habitat and purchasing land to protect holistic

ecosystems. The state wants to be good stewards of the land to fully implement programs for success. This bill will allow agencies and legislators to sit at a table together and talk about developing programs and policy. There is not enough opportunity to bring them all together now, so the Cabinet allows for that opportunity, and also allows everyone to hold each other accountable. The overall intent is collaboration and accountability for salmon recovery plans across the state.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) Counties should be at the table as part of this Cabinet. The Lummi Nation would like more dialogue with partners about what is most efficient. Salmon runs are in decline and in a critical state. There is so much bureaucracy, plans, talks, and meetings, but the state needs swift, meaningful action. There are projects sitting on lists just waiting for funding to come through. The intent to emphasize the importance of salmon recovery and accountability is good.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Debra Lekanoff, prime sponsor.

(Other) Paul Jewell, Washington State Association of Counties; Lisa Wilson, Lummi Nation; and Erik Neatherlin, Governor's Salmon Recovery Office.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.