

HOUSE BILL REPORT

2SSB 5083

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Fisheries & Wildlife*

Title: An act relating to the reestablishment of salmon hatcheries.

Brief Description: Reconstructing salmon hatcheries.

Sponsor(s): Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators L. Smith, Snyder, Oke and Rasmussen).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Fisheries & Wildlife, April 5, 1991, DPA.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
FISHERIES & WILDLIFE**

Majority Report: *Do pass as amended.* Signed by 11 members: Representatives R. King, Chair; Morris, Vice Chair; Wilson, Ranking Minority Member; Fuhrman, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Basich; Cole; Haugen; Hochstatter; Orr; Padden; and Spanel.

Staff: Keitlyn Watson (786-7310).

Background: In 1952, the Department of Fisheries constructed the Toutle River fish hatchery on the Green River, a tributary to the North Fork of the Toutle. The hatchery was federally funded under the Mitchell Act, which required mitigation for federal dams. In 1977, the hatchery system on the Toutle was expanded to add two state-funded facilities, including a rearing pond for spring chinook salmon at Deer Springs and a rearing pond for coho and fall chinook salmon at Beaver Slough. In 1980, Mt. St. Helens erupted, and both the Toutle and Deer Springs hatcheries were destroyed, by a mudslide and a sediment retention structure breach, respectively. Since 1985, salmon have returned from Beaver Slough releases, and some adults have migrated above the facility, indicating that the habitat conditions have improved. For the last five years, the Department of Fisheries has requested federal funds from the National Marine Fisheries Service to reconstruct the Toutle hatchery, and the requests have not been approved.

Summary of Amended Bill: The Department of Fisheries is to request full federal funding for the reconstruction and operation of the Green River salmon hatchery on the Green River tributary to the Toutle River. The Department of Fisheries shall work with the Washington congressional delegation to achieve this funding. To the extent that federal funds are available, the Department of Fisheries shall reconstruct and operate that hatchery. If the federal funding request is unsuccessful, the Department of Fisheries shall submit a report by December 1, 1991, to the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources and to the House Committee on Fisheries and Wildlife describing agency priorities for allocation of salmon hatchery funding.

The hatchery system on the Toutle shall ensure that adult salmon are allowed to migrate upstream of the hatchery for natural spawning purposes.

Amended Bill Compared to Second Substitute Bill: The amended bill removes the requirement that the Department of Fisheries operate the previously state-funded salmon hatcheries in the Toutle River at maximum productive capacity. The amended bill removes the requirement that the Toutle River hatchery operations remain at the level in effect on January 1, 1991. The amended bill clarifies that the federal funding that is requested shall be for the hatchery on the Green River. The amended bill removes the requirement that the hatchery on the Green River is to operate at full productive capacity. The amended bill removes the reporting requirements for a description of efforts to secure federal funding.

Fiscal Note: Requested March 29, 1991.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The Toutle River can now support salmon.

Testimony Against: The bill would limit the management flexibility of the Department of Fisheries. The bill is unclear as written.

Witnesses: Senator Linda Smith, prime sponsor (in favor); and Susan Markey, Department of Fisheries (opposed).