

VETO MESSAGE ON SB 5595-S2

June 11, 1999

To the Honorable President and Members,
The Senate of the State of Washington
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning herewith, without my approval as to sections 2, 7, 19, 20, 22(3), 22(4), and 22(5), Second Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 5595 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to salmon recovery funding;"

Second Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 5595 establishes a Salmon Recovery Funding Board (Board) to oversee \$119,928,000 in state and federal money dedicated to salmon recovery. The primary purposes of this legislation are to promote public oversight of funding for salmon recovery and to provide a coordinated state funding process.

Taxpayers, the federal government, and the Legislature demand and deserve greater accountability for the large sums of money we currently spend and will spend in the future on salmon recovery activities in our state. The Legislature has chosen to create the Board to oversee the selection of science-based salmon recovery projects and to make certain that the taxpayers' money is wisely spent. Clearly, the best projects are those that will bring back or protect the most fish.

A strong Board consisting of knowledgeable and concerned citizens from across our state is essential to the success of our statewide efforts to restore salmon runs. This legislation appropriately endows the Board with the broad powers necessary to oversee allocation of the salmon funding and to ensure that projects get done on time, stay within budget and achieve results for salmon.

In section 22 of this bill, however, the Legislature would have defeated the purpose of the Board by taking away its real authority and responsibility. Section 22 would have specifically allocated every single dollar of the salmon recovery money. Such allocation is contrary to giving the Board the responsibility to approve and finance those projects that will have the largest beneficial impact. This detailed itemization of appropriations and projects makes it almost superfluous to have a Board. It is our responsibility to make certain that there is strict accountability for the chosen projects and the money spent on them. Only a strong Board, with the authority and discretion, can do this. Further, after personally consulting with members of our congressional delegation - from both parties - I am convinced that our receipt of federal funds to restore salmon in our state would be placed in serious jeopardy without these vetoes. Members of our congressional delegation and local groups committed to salmon recovery have great expressed concern about our ability to have an effective salmon recovery plan if every dollar is pre-allocated.

For these reasons, I am compelled to veto several sections of 2E2SSB 5595 as follows:

Section 2 of the bill would have added new, important and necessary definitions to the salmon recovery statutes. However, one change would have prohibited funding updates related to the Growth Management Act, which are necessary components of salmon

recovery and should not be excluded from funding.

Section 7 of the bill would create a Technical Review Team (Team) to establish funding criteria and policies, and to review requests for funding grants on behalf of the Board. Under section 7, the Team would be appointed by the Director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife and be staffed by that department. However, the Board is staffed by the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC), and the IAC is to administer contracts approved by the Board. The Team would be a new scientific review group when we already have at least two other salmon recovery science entities. I agree that the function of the Team is essential to the success of salmon recovery projects, and that we should fully utilize the scientific and other expertise in the Department of Fish and Wildlife. But the scientific review and all other parts of our salmon recovery need to be part of a unified structure. Accordingly, I am requesting the director of the IAC, in consultation with the Director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife and the chair of the Board, to examine all of the various scientific and technical review groups, with the goal of recommending a comprehensive streamlined mechanism to handle the scientific aspects of salmon recovery. Additionally, I request a recommendation of an appropriate project review structure within the IAC and a report back to me on both tasks by July 15, 1999.

Sections 19 and 20 of this legislation would have removed funding for the Governor's Office and the Office of Financial Management related to the implementation of this act. My office and OFM have fundamental responsibilities related to salmon recovery and, accordingly, I have vetoed these sections to retain their funding.

Section 22 of the bill would provide a full and detailed allocation of how each of the \$119,928,000 in state and federal funding for salmon recovery is to be spent. Many of the projects are worthwhile and I will request that the Board consider and give appropriate deference to the allocation provisions in section 22. However, we must preserve the Board's authority to make fundamental decisions about how state and federal salmon recovery money is to be spent, to ensure the recovery and preservation of our wild salmon.

For these reasons, I have vetoed sections 2, 7, 19, 20, 22(3), 22(4), and 22(5) of Second Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 5595.

With the exception of sections 2, 7, 19, 20, 22(3), 22(4), and 22(5), Second Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 5595 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Gary Locke
Governor