

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5062

As Reported by House Committee On:
Fisheries, Ecology & Parks

Title: An act relating to the recreational salmon and marine fish enhancement program.

Brief Description: Creating the Puget Sound recreational fisheries enhancement oversight committee.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Parks, Fish & Wildlife (originally sponsored by Senators Doumit, Oke, Jacobsen, Winsley, Rasmussen and Kohl-Welles).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Fisheries, Ecology & Parks: 3/28/03, 4/1/03 [DP].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Creates the Puget Sound Recreational Fisheries Enhancement (PSRE) Oversight Committee to advise the Department of Fish and Wildlife on all aspects of the PSRE program.
- Clarifies that the PSRE funds may not be used to backfill shortfalls in other state funding sources.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES, ECOLOGY & PARKS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Cooper, Chair; Berkey, Vice Chair; Sump, Ranking Minority Member; Hinkle, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Buck, Hatfield, O'Brien, Pearson and Upthegrove.

Staff: Jeff Olsen (786-7157).

Background:

The Puget Sound Recreational Fisheries Enhancement Program (PSRE) was created by the Legislature in 1993 to increase recreational fishing opportunities for salmon and bottomfish in Puget Sound. The PSRE program requires the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) to produce delayed-release chinook salmon with a production goal of three million fish annually. The DFW is also required to research and develop programs

for the artificial rearing and release of marine bottomfish species.

The PSRE program is funded with a portion of each saltwater and combination recreational fishing license fee. Funds are deposited in the Recreational Fisheries Enhancement Account and are dedicated solely to the enhancement program.

The PSRE program coordinates with a citizen oversight committee comprised of people representing Puget Sound fishing groups and the sportfishing industry. The citizen committee meets quarterly to review program activities and provide comments and suggestions to the program.

Summary of Bill:

The PSRE Oversight Committee (Committee) is created. The Director of the DFW must appoint at least seven members to the Committee to ensure broad representation from sport fishing organizations. Members of the committee serve two year terms and are not compensated.

The Committee must advise the DFW on all aspects of the PSRE program, including the annual budget and proposed annual production of salmon and other species.

Funds in the Recreational Fisheries Enhancement Account may not be used to backfill shortfalls in other state funding sources.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

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

Testimony For: Creating the Committee ensures the program is implemented consistent with the original intent. Recreational fishers in Puget Sound support the program with dedicated funds, and these funds were used improperly last year to backfill funding shortfalls in other hatchery programs. This bill will add a degree of confidence to license purchasers that funds will be spent as intended. The DFW supports the Committee and the bill.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (In support) Frank Urabeck, Northwest Marine Trade Association; Jim Lone, Washington Recreational Fishing Industry Association; Rick Abbett, Trout Unlimited;

Mike Ryherd, Northwest Sportfishing Industry; and Tony Floor, Department of Fish and Wildlife.