
HOUSE BILL 2027

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2022 Regular Session

By Representatives Fitzgibbon, Chapman, and Tharinger

Read first time 01/18/22. Referred to Committee on Rural Development, Agriculture & Natural Resources.

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

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature intends to convene a task
6 force to provide recommendations to the legislature for the
7 establishment of a new governance structure for the department of
8 fish and wildlife, including restructuring or potentially eliminating
9 the fish and wildlife commission. The legislature finds that
10 collaborative, effective, accountable, and science-based
11 administration of the duties of the department of fish and wildlife
12 is necessary in order to better preserve, protect, and perpetuate the
13 fish and wildlife species of the state and to better balance
14 commercial and recreational uses with protection of the biodiversity
15 and natural heritage of the state.

16 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 77.04
17 RCW to read as follows:

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

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

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

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

9 (A) Hunters;

10 (B) Recreational fishers;

11 (C) Commercial fishers;

12 (D) The outdoor recreation industry;

13 (E) An organization focused on wildlife conservation;

14 (F) An organization focused on land conservation;

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

17 (H) The agricultural business community;

18 (I) The business community;

19 (J) County government; and

20 (K) City government.

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

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

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

33 (2) The task force shall:

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

37 (b) Consider changes to the mandate of the department of fish and
38 wildlife and the fish and wildlife commission established in RCW
39 77.04.012.

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

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

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

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

18 (7) This section expires July 1, 2025.

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