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**HOUSE BILL 1686**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2023 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Lekanoff, Kretz, Chapman, Dent, Doglio, Barkis, Springer, Hutchins, Peterson, Reed, Stokesbary, Fey, Timmons, Robertson, Leavitt, Reeves, Ortiz-Self, Ramel, and Pollet

AN ACT Relating to salmon recovery reform; reenacting and amending RCW 44.04.260; adding new sections to chapter 44.04 RCW; and creating a new section.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The legislature finds that salmon and other anadromous fish have a special historical, economic, and cultural importance to Washington. As a consequence of their centrality to treaty-protected rights reserved to federally recognized tribes, and the efforts required in order to preserve those rights and recover threatened species, salmon retain an importance akin to being a fourth branch of government alongside the legislature, the judiciary, and the executive.

(2) The legislature finds that it will take significant, if not unprecedented, commitment by the state and its subdivisions if the state is going to make significant progress towards its salmon recovery goals. Recovery of the iconic Northwest salmonid species, whose cultural and economic importance is so broadly understood that a recitation of the facts and their plight are no longer necessary, will take a shared commitment from all Washingtonians, industrial and commercial sectors on the landscape, and in the policy-making realm. This ultimately may include, but not be limited to, changes in land use and planning, hatchery and harvest management, habitat management, water quality and quantity, environmental permitting, and could also extend into other decisions made in policy areas as diverse as transportation, energy, school and infrastructure siting and projects, and growth management act reform.

(3) The legislature further finds that the extent of the shared commitment necessary to move the salmon recovery needle will require significant investment by the state legislature through being accountable to informed decision making for decisions on policy, laws, and funding. The state, through its legislature, must elevate salmon recovery on par with other issues facing the state and demonstrate that it, as an institution, is willing to join others in the shared commitment of salmon recovery.

(4) The legislature further finds that there are numerous regulations, programs, and initiatives that currently exist and are, on some level, woven into the existing salmon recovery tapestry. These programs and initiatives, all well intended, are not generally coordinated or maximizing their salmon recovery potential. The first steps towards a serious and sustainable salmon recovery commitment begins with maximizing the value of the existing infrastructure, deciding which programs deliver the highest return on investment, and increasing the scale of those programs that are best situated to move the state towards its salmon recovery goals today.

(5) The legislature further finds that focusing on existing state programs and policies can be uncomfortable to those that manage or rely on those programs. It is also uncomfortable for the legislature to challenge its own commitments and dedicate new funding to a long underfunded policy area. However, until the state and the legislature ask others to consider uncomfortable changes, it must first lead by doing so itself.

(6) The legislature, therefore, intends to create the joint salmon recovery and reform committee to look at salmon recovery wholistically, taking all of these factors into consideration, as a venue for discussion and course corrections that can support salmon recovery.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 44.04 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The joint salmon recovery and reform committee is created. The executive committee of the joint salmon recovery and reform committee consists of the chairs and ranking members of the house of representatives and senate committees whose jurisdiction includes salmon recovery issues, or their designees. The chair of the house of representatives and ranking member of the senate committees whose jurisdiction includes salmon recovery issues, or their designees, shall serve as cochairs of the joint salmon recovery and reform committee. All members of the house of representatives and senate standing committees whose jurisdiction includes salmon recovery issues and funding, including local government operations, the growth management act, fish passage barrier removal, the omnibus operating appropriations act, the omnibus capital appropriations act, and the omnibus transportation appropriations act, are eligible for membership on the joint salmon recovery and reform committee and shall serve when appointed by the executive committee of the joint salmon recovery and reform committee.

(2) The joint salmon recovery and reform committee shall review and research salmon recovery and reform programs, including programs and initiatives that address hatchery, harvest, habitat, and water quality and quantity issues, in order to educate and promote the dissemination of salmon recovery and reform research to state and local government policymakers, including legislators and associated staff. All four members of the executive committee of the joint salmon recovery and reform committee shall approve the annual work plan. Membership of the joint salmon recovery and reform committee may vary depending on the subject matter of oversight and research projects. The joint salmon recovery and reform committee may also make recommendations related to other issues regarding salmon recovery and reform.

(3) The executive committee of the joint salmon recovery and reform committee shall adopt rules and procedures for its operations.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 44.04 RCW to read as follows:

The members of the joint salmon recovery and reform committee will receive allowances while attending meetings of the committee or subcommittees and while engaged in other authorized business of the committees as provided in RCW 44.04.120. Subject to RCW 44.04.260, all expenses incurred by the committee must be paid upon voucher forms as provided by the office of financial management and signed by the cochairs of the joint salmon recovery and reform committee, or their authorized designees, and the authority of the chair or vice chair to sign vouchers continues until their successors are selected. Vouchers may be drawn upon funds appropriated for the expenses of the joint salmon recovery and reform committee.

**Sec.**  RCW 44.04.260 and 2012 c 229 s 204 and 2012 c 113 s 6 are each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

The joint legislative audit and review committee, the joint transportation committee, the select committee on pension policy, the legislative evaluation and accountability program committee, the office of legislative support services, the joint higher education committee, and the joint ((~~legislative systems~~)) salmon recovery and reform committee are subject to such operational policies, procedures, and oversight as are deemed necessary by the facilities and operations committee of the senate and the executive rules committee of the house of representatives to ensure operational adequacy of the agencies of the legislative branch. As used in this section, "operational policies, procedures, and oversight" includes the development process of biennial budgets, contracting procedures, personnel policies, and compensation plans, selection of a chief administrator, facilities, and expenditures. This section does not grant oversight authority to the facilities and operations committee of the senate over any standing committee of the house of representatives or oversight authority to the executive rules committee of the house of representatives over any standing committee of the senate.

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