H-2139.1

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**HOUSE BILL 2292**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2024 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Dent, Chapman, Kretz, Barkis, and Barnard

AN ACT Relating to hatchery improvement; creating new sections; providing an expiration date; and declaring an emergency.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature finds that salmon hold unique and irreplaceable significance in Washington's ecosystem, culture, and economy. The iconic species not only serves as a keystone in maintaining the ecological balance of our waterways but also fishing and the consumption of fish are central to culture of indigenous and nonindigenous peoples. Unfortunately, salmon populations face numerous challenges that require complex, multifaceted, integrated responses. To truly find success in salmon recovery, all parties must work together on each section of the overall solution. Hatcheries represent one piece of this puzzle. When properly aligned with salmon's broader conservation goals, hatcheries are a critical tool that can help mitigate the ecological and economic impacts of low salmon populations. Therefore, the legislature intends to continue in its quest for scientifically supported solutions for salmon by collaboratively studying and improving state and tribal hatchery efforts.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The department of fish and wildlife shall work in collaboration with tribal comanagers and at least two jointly selected independent scientists to identify for analysis two state-managed salmonid hatcheries and three salmonid hatcheries managed by tribal comanagers located near waterways entering the Puget Sound to audit and identify areas of improvement measured in terms of adult survival in topics including:

(a) Funding challenges;

(b) Staff capacity;

(c) Infrastructure capacity; and

(d) Identification of ecological factors limiting return of adult hatchery fish.

(2) At least one hatchery chosen for an audit must be located near a significantly impacted waterway where wild salmon recovery alone will not meet treaty obligations and limits harvest opportunities for all fishers.

(3) The department of fish and wildlife and tribal comanagers in collaboration shall provide annual progress reports to the legislature pursuant to RCW 43.01.036, by December 1, 2025, with a final report due on December 1, 2026.

(4) The amount of the funding appropriated for the purposes of this section that is distributed to tribal comanagers must be equal to the amount that is distributed to the department of fish and wildlife.

(5) This section expires July 1, 2027.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately.

**--- END ---**