
**Agriculture and Natural Resources
Committee**

HB 2463

Brief Description: Conducting a review of salmon planning and recovery efforts.

Sponsors: Representatives Lekanoff and Pollet.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee to conduct a performance audit of salmon planning and recovery efforts in two watersheds in Eastern Washington and two watersheds in Western Washington.

Hearing Date: 1/30/24

Staff: Rebecca Lewis (786-7339).

Background:

Salmon Recovery.

Several species of salmon, as well as Puget Sound steelhead trout, are listed as either threatened or endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act. The Governor's Salmon Recovery Office, administered through the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO), is responsible for coordinating state strategy for salmon recovery. The Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) is responsible for managing the state's fish and wildlife resources. Several other state agencies, including the Departments of Ecology and Natural Resources, the State Conservation Commission, and the RCO, either have regulatory authority with respect to various aspects of natural resource and land management related to salmon recovery, administering grant funding for salmon recovery projects, or both.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee.

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) is a statutorily created body consisting of eight members from the Senate and eight members from the House of Representatives, with no more than four members from each house from the same political party. The JLARC conducts a variety of analyses including performance audits, program evaluations, and sunset reviews.

At the end of each legislative session in an odd-numbered year, JLARC must develop and approve a performance audit work plan for the ensuing biennium. The work plan must include a description of each audit and its cost. When considering the work plan, JLARC must consider:

- whether a newly created or significantly altered program warrants continued oversight because of a significant fiscal impact or a high risk of not succeeding;
- whether implementation of the program has significantly failed to meet its goals and objectives;
- whether a follow-up audit would ensure that previous recommendations for improvements were implemented; and
- whether JLARC is required to do an audit by enacted legislation.

Summary of Bill:

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) must conduct a performance audit of salmon planning and recovery efforts within four watersheds in Washington. Two of the watersheds identified by JLARC for the performance audit must be located east of the Cascade Mountains, and two must be located west of the Cascade Mountains. Within these watersheds, the performance audit must identify:

- the local, state, federal, and co-managers involved in recovery efforts and other relevant entities whose work may impact recovery efforts;
- the extent to which recovery efforts include shared and measurable goals for recovery and the extent to which work is coordinated;
- the extent to which scientific data is defined consistently, shared, and used to inform decision-making;
- plans for assessing progress made in implementing recovery efforts; and
- funding for recovery efforts, as well as constraints imposed by funding sources.

The audit must be completed by December 31, 2026.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 25, 2024.

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