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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

Read first time 01/31/23. Referred to Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources.

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

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

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

13 (2) The legislature finds that it will take significant, if not  
14 unprecedented, commitment by the state and its subdivisions if the  
15 state is going to make significant progress towards its salmon  
16 recovery goals. Recovery of the iconic Northwest salmonid species,  
17 whose cultural and economic importance is so broadly understood that  
18 a recitation of the facts and their plight are no longer necessary,  
19 will take a shared commitment from all Washingtonians, industrial and  
20 commercial sectors on the landscape, and in the policy-making realm.  
21 This ultimately may include, but not be limited to, changes in land

1 use and planning, hatchery and harvest management, habitat  
2 management, water quality and quantity, environmental permitting, and  
3 could also extend into other decisions made in policy areas as  
4 diverse as transportation, energy, school and infrastructure siting  
5 and projects, and growth management act reform.

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

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

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

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

36 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 44.04  
37 RCW to read as follows:

38 (1) The joint salmon recovery and reform committee is created.  
39 The executive committee of the joint salmon recovery and reform

1 committee consists of the chairs and ranking members of the house of  
2 representatives and senate committees whose jurisdiction includes  
3 salmon recovery issues, or their designees. The chair of the house of  
4 representatives and ranking member of the senate committees whose  
5 jurisdiction includes salmon recovery issues, or their designees,  
6 shall serve as cochairs of the joint salmon recovery and reform  
7 committee. All members of the house of representatives and senate  
8 standing committees whose jurisdiction includes salmon recovery  
9 issues and funding, including local government operations, the growth  
10 management act, fish passage barrier removal, the omnibus operating  
11 appropriations act, the omnibus capital appropriations act, and the  
12 omnibus transportation appropriations act, are eligible for  
13 membership on the joint salmon recovery and reform committee and  
14 shall serve when appointed by the executive committee of the joint  
15 salmon recovery and reform committee.

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

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

31 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 44.04  
32 RCW to read as follows:

33 The members of the joint salmon recovery and reform committee  
34 will receive allowances while attending meetings of the committee or  
35 subcommittees and while engaged in other authorized business of the  
36 committees as provided in RCW 44.04.120. Subject to RCW 44.04.260,  
37 all expenses incurred by the committee must be paid upon voucher  
38 forms as provided by the office of financial management and signed by  
39 the cochairs of the joint salmon recovery and reform committee, or

1 their authorized designees, and the authority of the chair or vice  
2 chair to sign vouchers continues until their successors are selected.  
3 Vouchers may be drawn upon funds appropriated for the expenses of the  
4 joint salmon recovery and reform committee.

5 **Sec. 4.** RCW 44.04.260 and 2012 c 229 s 204 and 2012 c 113 s 6  
6 are each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

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

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