

**HB 2598 - H AMD 1817**

By Representative Lekanoff

**NOT CONSIDERED 03/12/2026**

1 Strike everything after the enacting clause and insert the  
2 following:

3 "NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that in recognition  
4 of the cultural, treaty, economic, recreational, and legal importance  
5 of salmon in Washington, many state agencies' role is to implement  
6 policy and laws, and they devote significant program attention and  
7 resources to supporting the recovery, viability, and protection of  
8 anadromous fish. Further, the legislature recognizes the importance  
9 of a coordinated approach to statewide salmon recovery not just  
10 between state agencies, but also in partnership with the state's  
11 tribal comanagers. The legislature intends to ensure that all  
12 pertinent state agencies share in and support the mission of  
13 recovering and protecting salmon in Washington by creating a venue  
14 through which state agencies and tribes can come together to review  
15 overall progress towards salmon recovery. However, the legislature  
16 does not intend to reallocate among state agencies any existing  
17 programs or responsibilities related to salmon recovery in Washington  
18 through this act.

19 **Sec. 2.** RCW 77.85.005 and 2009 c 345 s 9 are each amended to  
20 read as follows:

21 (1) The legislature finds that repeated attempts to improve  
22 salmonid fish runs throughout the state of Washington have failed to  
23 ~~((avert listings of))~~ recover salmon and steelhead runs that are  
24 listed as threatened or endangered under the federal endangered  
25 species act (16 U.S.C. Sec. 1531 et seq.). These ~~((listings))~~  
26 continued declines threaten the ~~((sport))~~ recreational, commercial,  
27 and tribal fishing industries as well as the economic well-being and  
28 vitality of vast areas of the state. It is the intent of the  
29 legislature to ~~((begin))~~ strengthen activities required for the  
30 recovery of salmon stocks as soon as possible, although the  
31 legislature understands that successful recovery efforts may not be

1 realized for many years because of the life cycle of salmon and the  
2 complex array of natural and human-caused problems they face.

3 (2) The legislature finds that it is in the interest of the  
4 citizens of the state of Washington for the state to (~~retain primary~~  
5 ~~responsibility for managing the natural resources of the state,~~  
6 ~~rather than abdicate those responsibilities to the federal~~  
7 ~~government, and that the~~) develop and implement comanagement  
8 relationships between the tribes and state branches of governments  
9 under their jurisdiction. The state may best accomplish this  
10 objective by (~~integrating~~) improved integration of local, tribal,  
11 and regional recovery activities into a statewide strategy that can  
12 make the most effective use of provisions of federal laws (~~allowing~~  
13 for a state lead), programs and fiscal investments to support the  
14 state and tribal plans in salmon recovery, delivered through  
15 implementation activities consistent with regional and watershed  
16 recovery plans.

17 (3) The legislature also (~~finds that a~~) supports the statewide  
18 salmon recovery strategy (~~must be developed and implemented through~~  
19 ~~an~~) and recognizes the state's active public involvement process in  
20 order to ensure public participation in, and support for, salmon  
21 recovery.

22 (4) The legislature also finds that there is a substantial link  
23 between the provisions of the federal endangered species act and the  
24 federal clean water act (33 U.S.C. Sec. 1251 et seq.).

25 (5) The legislature further finds that effective habitat  
26 protection and restoration is a vital component of salmon recovery  
27 efforts. With amplified climate change effects and human population  
28 growth, the legislature must protect what the state currently has and  
29 will have in the future, and thus must vastly increase the scope and  
30 scale of restoration, also including investments and inclusion of  
31 salmon recovery in Washington local, state, and tribal government  
32 policy, laws, and regulations. Therefore, it is the intent of the  
33 legislature to specifically address salmon habitat protection and  
34 restoration for properly functioning watershed conditions for salmon  
35 in a coordinated manner and to develop a structure that allows for  
36 the coordinated delivery of federal, state, tribal, and local  
37 assistance to communities for habitat projects that will assist in  
38 the recovery and enhancement of salmon stocks. A strong watershed-  
39 based locally implemented plan is essential for local, regional, and  
40 statewide salmon recovery.

1       (6) The legislature also finds that credible scientific review  
2 and oversight is essential for any salmon recovery effort to be  
3 successful.

4       (7) The legislature further finds that it is important to monitor  
5 the overall health of the salmon resource to determine if recovery  
6 efforts are providing expected returns. It is important to monitor  
7 salmon habitat projects and salmon recovery activities in a  
8 coordinated manner to determine their effectiveness in order to  
9 ~~((secure))~~ maintain federal acceptance of the state's approach to  
10 salmon recovery. Adaptive management ~~((cannot—exist—without~~  
11 ~~monitoring))~~ can only occur when the state has identified a baseline,  
12 from which it can then monitor the benefits of its actions and how  
13 the salmon and steelhead are responding to improved watershed  
14 functions. For these reasons, the legislature believes that a  
15 coordinated and integrated monitoring system should be ~~((developed~~  
16 ~~and implemented))~~ expanded.

17       (8) The legislature therefore finds that a coordinated framework  
18 and enhanced leadership for responding to the salmon crisis is needed  
19 immediately. To that end, the governor's salmon recovery office  
20 ~~((should be created to))~~ provides overall coordination of the state's  
21 response; an independent science panel ~~((is needed to))~~ provides  
22 scientific review and oversight; a coordinated state funding process  
23 ~~((should be established))~~ is implemented through a salmon recovery  
24 funding board and the fish passage barrier removal board; the  
25 appropriate local or tribal government ~~((should))~~ provides local  
26 leadership in identifying and sequencing habitat restoration and  
27 acquisition projects to be funded by state agencies; habitat projects  
28 should be implemented without delay; and a strong partnership between  
29 federal, state, tribal, and locally based efforts to restore salmon  
30 habitat ~~((should be established by providing))~~ provides a framework  
31 to allow citizen volunteers to work effectively.

32       (9) Furthermore, the legislature declares it to be the goal of  
33 the state to support the recovery and enhancement of salmon and  
34 steelhead stocks in order to support Washington's tribal treaty  
35 obligations, support nontribal commercial and recreational fisheries,  
36 and achieve the delisting and recovery of threatened or endangered  
37 salmon and steelhead runs under the federal endangered species act.

38       NEW SECTION. Sec. 3. A new section is added to chapter 77.85  
39 RCW to read as follows:

1 (1) The salmon advisory commission is established to improve the  
2 coordination and understanding of the habitat, harvest, hydro,  
3 hatcheries, predation, and other factors that influence salmon and  
4 steelhead recovery. The commission also shall consider existing  
5 efforts and needs in all areas that influence salmon and steelhead  
6 recovery, in order to identify gaps; receive and discuss monitoring  
7 adaptive management needs; and develop recommendations to be  
8 submitted to the governor and the legislature regarding agency  
9 actions, legislation, and budget priorities to enhance salmon and  
10 steelhead recovery.

11 (2) The salmon advisory commission includes the following  
12 members:

13 (a) The director of the governor's office of Indian affairs, or  
14 the director's designee;

15 (b) (i) Each elected chair of a federally recognized Indian tribe  
16 whose traditional lands and territories include parts of Washington,  
17 by invitation of the governor;

18 (ii) Each member invited pursuant to (b) (i) of this subsection  
19 may designate an elected councilmember of a federally recognized  
20 Indian tribe whose traditional lands and territories include parts of  
21 Washington, to serve as the invited member's alternate;

22 (c) The director, or the director's designee, of the following  
23 agencies:

24 (i) The department of fish and wildlife;

25 (ii) The department of natural resources;

26 (iii) The department of ecology;

27 (iv) The Puget Sound partnership;

28 (v) The department of transportation;

29 (vi) The department of archaeology and historic preservation;

30 (vii) The recreation and conservation office;

31 (viii) The state conservation commission;

32 (ix) The department of agriculture;

33 (x) The parks and recreation commission; and

34 (xi) The department of health;

35 (d) (i) One member from each of the two largest caucuses of the  
36 house of representatives, appointed by the speaker of the house of  
37 representatives;

38 (ii) One member from each of the two largest caucuses of the  
39 senate, appointed by the president of the senate; and

1 (e) Two representatives of cities and counties, appointed by the  
2 governor.

3 (3) The salmon advisory commission shall be chaired by three  
4 cochairs, selected as follows:

5 (a) One cochair must be a chair of a federally recognized Indian  
6 tribe invited to the commission by the governor pursuant to  
7 subsection (2)(b) of this section, elected by the chairs of federally  
8 recognized Indian tribes invited to the commission;

9 (b) One cochair must be a legislator appointed to the commission  
10 pursuant to subsection (2)(d) of this section, elected by the  
11 legislative members appointed to the commission; and

12 (c) One cochair must be an agency director, or an agency  
13 director's designee, seated on the commission pursuant to subsection  
14 (2)(c) of this section, appointed by the governor.

15 (4) The salmon advisory commission shall convene at least twice  
16 per year. Two meetings scheduled to correspond with the governor's  
17 centennial accord meeting may satisfy this requirement.

18 (5) Staff support for the commission shall be provided by the  
19 governor's salmon recovery office.

20 (6) Legislative members of the salmon advisory commission are  
21 reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW 44.04.120.  
22 Nonlegislative members are not entitled to be reimbursed for travel  
23 expenses if they are elected officials or are participating on behalf  
24 of an employer, governmental entity, or other organization. Any  
25 reimbursement for other nonlegislative members is subject to chapter  
26 43.03 RCW.

27 (7) The salmon advisory commission shall provide semiannual  
28 reports in accordance with RCW 43.01.036 on its activities including  
29 any recommendations on agency actions, potential legislation, and  
30 budget priorities to enhance salmon and steelhead recovery to the  
31 governor and the appropriate fiscal and policy committees of the  
32 legislature. The first report is due by October 1, 2026, and  
33 subsequent reports are due by June 1st and December 1st of each  
34 year."

35 Correct the title.

EFFECT: • Modifies intent language relating to Washington's  
salmon recovery role, coordination with other branches of government,  
and comanagement with tribes.

- Replaces language expressing legislative intent to include salmon recovery in the Growth Management Act with language expressing legislative intent to include salmon recovery in local, state, and tribal government policy, laws, and regulations.

- Changes the Salmon Advisory Commission (Commission) cochair from two legislators to three cochair: One cochair elected from the chairs of federally recognized Indian tribes invited to the Commission, one cochair elected from the legislators appointed to the Commission, and one cochair appointed by the Governor from the agency directors, or agency director designees, seated on the Commission.

- Allows the Commission to schedule both meetings required under the bill to correspond with the Governor's Centennial Accord meeting.

- Requires the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office to provide staff support to the Commission instead of legislative staff.

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