

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5384

As of February 6, 2025

Title: An act relating to conducting a review of Washington's riparian programs.

Brief Description: Conducting a review of Washington's riparian programs.

Sponsors: Senators Dozier, Schoesler and Wilson, J..

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture & Natural Resources: 2/06/25.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee to conduct a review of Washington's riparian programs and report to the Legislature by June 1, 2027.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Staff: Jeff Olsen (786-7428)

Background: Recreation and Conservation Office. The Recreation and Conservation Office administers several grant programs for numerous boards and councils to create outdoor recreational opportunities, protect the state's wildlife habitat and farmland, and assist salmon recovery efforts.

Salmon Recovery Funding Board. The Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRF Board) is responsible for making grants and loans for salmon habitat projects and salmon recovery activities from the amounts appropriated to the SRF Board for this purpose. The 2023-25 Capital budget provided \$25 million to the SRF Board for a Riparian Grant Program.

State Conservation Commission. The State Conservation Commission (Commission) performs several functions, including assisting the state's 47 local conservation districts in

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carrying out soil, water, and other natural resource conservation projects. The 2023-25 Capital budget provided \$25 million to the Commission for a Riparian Grant Program.

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee. The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee(JLARC) is a legislative committee consisting of nonpartisan staff that conducts research, audits and reviews. The legislative auditor oversees the work and can make recommendations to agencies and the Legislature.

Summary of Bill: JLARC must conduct a review of Washington's riparian programs and report to the Legislature by June 1, 2027. A preliminary report to the Legislature is due December 1, 2025.

The report must include:

- a list of funded riparian programs including the entities eligible under each program;
- local match amounts and maximum grant amounts allowed under each program;
- current and recent past funding amounts of each program; and
- a review of the effectiveness for each program.

The report must also include recommendations for continuing, enhancing, consolidating, or eliminating programs, and any changes that would increase access to funding and remove administrative burdens.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 1, 2025.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: As a recipient of funding for riparian projects, stream bank stabilization is important. There is a process to get funding in a timely manner. Stabilizing stream banks saves trees and farmland, needed to protect the edge of the stream bank. High water flows can impact the effectiveness of projects. There needs to be a review of the effectiveness of the programs, and are we adequately funding our projects. From 2001 to 2021, private-forest landowners removed a large number of fish passage barriers and opened up miles of salmon habitat. Millions have been spent on riparian habitat, and an assessment needs to be done of our efforts.

OTHER: Supportive of the bill, but we need to take what we have already done and implemented, and compare to what we are doing now. The tribes and five corners have already signed off on what needs to be done. Salmon production needs to be doubled.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Perry Dozier, Prime Sponsor; Tom Davis, WA Forest

Protection Association.

OTHER: john worthington.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.