



STATE OF WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE
1111 Washington Street SE
PO Box 40917
Olympia, WA 98504-0917

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TOPIC 3: 2007 LEGISLATIVE SESSION UPDATE

Prepared and Presented By: Jim Fox

Approved by the Director: 

Proposed Action: Briefing

The 2007 legislative session began on January 8th and ended on April 22nd. A number of bills were introduced that had the potential to affect IAC, SRFB and other state and local agencies involved in salmon recovery and preserving and restoring watershed health. These bills are summarized below.

IAC Name Change

The Legislature approved IAC's request for a new name. The bill (HB1813) is on the Governor's desk for signing, which should occur in the next several weeks. The IAC will become the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.

Acquisition and Disposal of State Habitat and Recreation Land

SSB5236 implements the recommendations in IAC's *Coordinated Strategy for Habitat and Recreation Land Acquisition* (the "SB6242 report") submitted to the Legislature in 2005. The bill creates a Habitat and Recreation Lands Coordinating Group to coordinate planning of WDFW, Parks and DNR habitat and recreation land acquisition and disposal, centralizing acquisition of data, and monitoring the success of acquisitions. The bill passed the Legislature and had been delivered to the Governor for signing.

Governor's Salmon Recovery Office

SB5224, as originally introduced, would have moved the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office (GSRO) to IAC. The Senate amended the bill to keep the GSRO in the Governor's office, where members believed the office would be more effective in carrying out its various functions. SSB5224 also eliminates the current Independent Science Panel but authorizes the Washington Academy of Science to impanel a group of scientists to perform a similar function. The bill also puts the Governor's Forum on



Monitoring Salmon Recovery and Watershed Health into law, specifying that the Governor appoint the chair and giving the Forum the additional responsibility of reviewing state agency monitoring budget requests and making recommendations to the Office of Financial Management and the Legislature. The bill passed the Legislature and is on the way to the Governor for signing.

Disclosure of Information Related to SRFB Grants

HB1598, as originally introduced, would have required any entity directly or indirectly receiving SRFB funds to disclose information about those funds as if the entity were subject to the state's Open Public Records Act. After hearing concerns expressed by IAC staff, the Washington Association of Counties and other organizations, the Senate amended the bill to apply only to SRFB project sponsors. SHB1598 passed the Legislature and is on the way to the Governor for signing.

Puget Sound Partnership

ESSB5372 dissolves the Puget Sound Action Team (which is currently part of the Governor's office) and creates a new state agency, the Puget Sound Partnership. The Partnership, under the guidance of a Leadership Council, Ecosystem Coordination Board, and Puget Sound Science Panel, will develop an action agenda for restoring Puget Sound health. The bill requires the SRFB to give preference to projects from sponsors designated by the Partnership as "Puget Sound Partners." The bill is on the way to the Governor for signing.

Puget Sound Research

2SHB1656 establishes the Puget Sound Scientific Research Account to assist in identifying and addressing gaps in research important to restoring Puget Sound health. The bill is on the Governor's desk.

Marine Resource Committees

Based on the success of the marine resource committees (MRCs) established in northern Puget Sound as part of the federally established and funded Northwest Straits Commission, SHB2049 authorizes counties to form MRCs in the lower Puget Sound. Newly formed South Sound MRCs will be supported by the Puget Sound Partnership. The bill is on the Governor's desk.

Other

2SSB5164 expands the Veterans Conservation Corps. The SRFB is required to notify project sponsors of the availability of assistance from the Corps. Department of Veterans Affairs funding for VCC participation in a project will count towards the sponsor match. The bill passed the Legislature and is headed to the Governor.

SB5567 would have created the Salmon and Watershed Planning Integration Workgroup to review the status of salmon recovery and watershed entities, plans, and projects. The workgroup was to have made recommendations to the Legislature at the end of 2007. The bill died in the Senate.

Senate Confirmations of SRFB Members

All of the SRFB citizen members were up for Senate Confirmation. The Senate Natural Resources, Ocean and Recreation Committee did not schedule new confirmation hearings for SRFB but did forward the confirmation of Chair Ruckelshaus to the full Senate, where he was confirmed on April 5th.

Capital Budget

The Capital Budget passed by the Legislature includes \$18M in state money and \$42M in federal spending authority for SRFB grants. There is an additional \$40,750,000 in state funds for the SRFB specifically for Puget Sound restoration and acquisition projects. The SRFB is required to provide the Puget Sound Partnership the opportunity to review and comment on Puget Sound projects, and with the Puget Sound Nearshore Partnership on nearshore and estuary projects.

The Capital budget also included \$6M for the Family Forest Fish Passage Program and \$6M federal pass-through funds for hatchery reform.