

Weekly Legislative Update: Rivers

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We have now passed the mid-point of the session. The deadline to pass bills out of the policy committees was February 3rd. About half of the bills we supported, and all of the bills we opposed, did not make it and are dead for this session. The rest of the bills are having hearings in the fiscal committees. The cut-off for passing the fiscal committees is this Monday, February 7th.

Bills Needing Action This Week

No Action requested this week.

Bills We Support

HB 1172 Repeals Initiative 456 passed in 1984 during Washington state and tribes fishing wars in which Billy Frank Jr. went to jail 50 times for treaty protected fishing in the Nisqually River. Recognizes judicially affirmed and treaty-reserved fishing rights and promoting state-tribal cooperative agreements in the management of salmon, trout, and steelhead resources. Sponsored by Rep. Lekanoff at request of Attorney General Ferguson. The League was a strong opponent of Initiative 456 in 1984. Passed out of House 96-0, referred to Senate Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources and Parks Committee

HB 1631 Preserving kelp and eelgrass. (See Forests for update)

HB 1640 Creates a joint legislative Tribal-State Committee. Tribes to meet with state legislators to discuss and work on tribal issues together. A good idea for looking forwards to resolve issues. Had public hearing in State Government & Tribal Relations Committee January 12th. No further action, so bill is probably dead for session.

SHB 1653 Substitute bill creates the Salmon Advisory Cabinet to convene agency directors, legislators and tribal leaders to develop recommendations regarding agency actions, legislation and budget priorities to enhance salmon and steelhead recovery. Original bill had public hearing on January 20th in House State Government and Tribal Relations Committee, and executive session January 26th, substitute bill passed and referred to Appropriations, but no public hearing has yet been scheduled, so probably dead for session.

[SHB 1691](#) Financial responsibility requirement related to oil spills. Requires oil vessels and facilities to demonstrate financial ability to pay for a “worst case” oil spill. Bill would stop oil companies from externalizing costs and relieve taxpayers of the financial burden. Public hearing in House Environment and Energy Committee January 13, and executive session held January 21st, substitute bill passed, referred to Appropriation, had hearing in Appropriation January 31, and Executive session February 3rd.

[HB 1838](#) State Salmon Strategy (Lorraine Loomis bill) sponsored by Governor Inslee with Tribes to protect our remaining EPA listed salmon focusing on riparian and river habitat restoration. Public hearing in House Rural Development Agriculture & Natural Resources on January 19th brought out landowner and farmer strong opposition as they were not consulted on legislation and large (200’-350’) riparian buffers would remove much of their land from production. They prefer the Voluntary Stewardship program. Second public hearing held January 21. Bill apparently dead for session, but funding may be in the Operating budget; stay tuned.

[HB 1978](#) Concerning Shoreline Master Programs. Review and revision of Shoreline Master Plans would be revised from 8 to 10 years. They are way behind now and need to catch up. Public hearing in Local Government Committee Jan 19, executive session January 21, referred to Rules and on January 28 passed out of Rules 93-1-0-4. Referred to Senate Environment, Energy and Technology Committee.

[SB 5504](#) Discovery Pass free days extended from state parks to other state recreation sites and lands. Bill has passed out of Senate Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks to Rules where it passed 43-0-0-6, and was referred to the House Community & Economic Development Committee.

[SHB 5885](#) Relating to marine shoreline habitat. Substitute bill directs Department of Ecology to conduct baseline survey of Puget Sound marine shorelines using a on- the -water view of the shoreline, and to consider the results in their enforcement authority. Conducts survey of Puget Sound marine shorelines identifying un-permitted development and requiring changes, creating near shore habitat for forage fish and juvenile salmon. Public hearing held in the Senate Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources and Parks Committee January 27; executive session February 3 passing a substitute bill, which was referred to Senate Ways & Means, where public hearing was held on February 5.

Bills We Oppose

[SB 5608](#) Related to free public access to state parks and lands. Would repeal the Discovery Pass which State Parks needs for sustained revenue to maintain our parks. Public hearing in

the Senate Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources and Parks Committee January 13, has not proceeded on, so is dead.

[SB 5632](#) Concerning public investment in critical water infrastructure projects. Problem here is agencies promoting projects are evaluating which projects get selected and ranked for funding, and that there is no public input on the selected projects. Bill needs revision. Had public hearing held in Senate Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources and Parks Committee on June 18th, has not proceeded on, so is dead.

How You Can Be Involved

- During the legislative session we will send Action Alerts in the [Legislative Newsletter](#). Please respond to these, which will direct you to an application to facilitate communicating with your legislators on an important vote in committees or on the chamber floor.
- Local Leagues in Washington have action chairs who coordinate action teams. Some local Leagues have environmental teams to take action locally. Contact your local League action chair to find out and join.
- You may also express your opinion on legislation with the LWVWA issue chairs. We will take your perspectives under considerations as we determine our support for legislation and prepare testimony. Raelene Gold, Rivers Issue Chair, rgold@lwvwa.org.