

Weekly Legislative Update: Rivers

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February 20, 2022

The House and Senate worked furiously through last Tuesday to move bills out of their chamber of origin. Bills that had much opposition and many amendments didn't make it, and will have to wait for another year. Starting last Tuesday bills that passed out of their chamber of origin had public hearings and executive sessions in the other chamber in an effort to move bills along swiftly. Also, there was a hearing of the Capital supplemental budget on Thursday. This upcoming week successful bills will have hearings in the opposite house. Also, on Monday, February 21st the Senate Ways & Means Committee will hear SB 5693, the Senate supplemental operating budget. We'll be looking for funding for salmon recovery that was in the Governor's budget. Though the Governor's Salmon Strategy bill failed this session, some of the funding for salmon may be provided in this budget.

Bills Needing Action This Week

E2SHB 1691 Financial responsibility requirements 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. Passed out of House 83-13. Public hearing to be held in the Senate Environment, Energy & Technology Committee Tuesday, February 22, 10:30am.

⚠ **Please help get this important bill pass, sign in PRO** in Senate Environment, Energy and Technology Committee public hearing anytime **one hour before February 22, 10:30am meeting.** <https://app.leg.wa.gov/csi/Testifier/Add?chamber=Senate&mld=29857&ald=146648&cald=19714&tld=3>

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, identifying unpermitted development, and to consider the results in their enforcement authority. Last year's bill on shoreline armoring bill was not as comprehensive as this is. Creates more near shore habitat for forage fish and juvenile salmon. Passed out of Senate, scheduled for public hearing in the House Environment & Energy Committee February 22, 8am.

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<https://app.leg.wa.gov/csi/Testifier/Add?chamber=House&mlid=29850&ald=147037&cald=19791&tld=3>

Bills We Support

HB 1172 Recognizes judicially affirmed and treaty-reserved fishing rights and promotes state-tribal cooperative agreements in the management of salmon, trout, and steelhead resources.

The League was a strong opponent of the 1984 Initiative 456, which abrogated tribal treaty rights. Passed out of House 96-0. Had public hearing February 17, 1:30pm in Senate Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources and Parks Committee; executive session scheduled for February 24 at 1:30pm.

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HB 1700/SB 5598 Concerning sustainable funding for derelict vessel removal account using the watercraft excise tax. Derelict vessels reduce near shoreline habitat for fish and pollute the water. Funding provided will help when vessel is abandoned or owner unable. SB 5598 currently in the Senate Ways and Means Committee. HB 1700 passed out of House 94-0, public hearing and executive session held Feb. 17 in Senate Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks Committee. Referred to Senate Ways & Means.

HB 1978 Concerning Shoreline Master Programs. Required review and revision of Shoreline Master Plans by counties and some cities would be revised from 8 to 10 years. They are way behind now and need to catch up. Passed out of House 93-1-0-4. Public hearing held February 16th in Senate Environment, Energy and Technology Committee; executive session scheduled for February 22, 10:30am.

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; public hearing held February 16, and executive session February 18: bill passed.

SB 5619 Conserving and restoring kelp forests and eelgrass meadows in Washington State. 2nd Substitute passed out of Senate. (See Forests for update.)

New Bill: [SB 5747](#) Concerning the statewide master oil and hazardous substance vessel spill prevention and contingency plan by request of Department of Ecology. Department of Ecology during preparation of the statewide master plan to schedule unannounced vessel oil spill drills to test oil spill contingency plans. Also, to include other federal and state agencies, Idaho and federally recognized tribes. Passed out of Senate 49-0. Public hearing and executive session held February 18 in House Environment and Energy Committee.

[E2SSH 5803](#) Establishing a presumption of liability for wildfires caused by electric utility's equipment. Trees falling on utility electric transmission lines is an important cause of wildfires. Bill addresses utility's responsibilities to prevent vegetation build up in rightaways under transmission lines. The bill passed out of Senate 49Y-0Nays. Public hearing to be held in House Rural Development, Agriculture & Natural Resources February 23, 10am.

[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, identifying unpermitted development, and to consider the results in their enforcement authority. Last year's bill on shoreline armoring bill was not as comprehensive as this is. Creates more near shore habitat for forage fish and juvenile salmon. Passed out of Senate, scheduled for public hearing in the House Environment & Energy Committee February 22, 8am. Please sign in PRO one hour before public hearing.

Bills We Supported that Did Not Pass

[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 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 scheduled, so dead for session.

[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 dead for session, but funding for some measures in bill may be included in the House Operating budget.

Bills We Opposed that Did Not Pass

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.