

Weekly Legislative Update: Rivers

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Bills Needing Action This Week

⚠ **HB 1869** Encouraging salmon recovery through the Voluntary Stewardship Program. This bill has a public hearing in the House Environment and Energy Committee on Friday, January 28th, 10am. Please sign in PRO: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/csi/Tester/Add?chamber=House&mlid=29602&ald=144526&calid=19049&tld=3>

You may express support for bills in hearings with the [online process](#). Select House or Senate then the committee and the date and time of the meeting, then follow the menus. Detailed instructions are in this week's Legislative Newsletter. Remember, only authorized members can speak for the League; the Issue Chairs will do that, so please leave the "Organization" box blank. A more powerful influence is many voices speaking for themselves rather than many voices speaking for the League.

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.

HB 1653 Improving state-wide coordination in support of anadromous fish recovery. Creates a Governor's Salmon Recovery Office and a Salmon Cabinet. An attempt to get coordination of all efforts to achieve state's salmon recovery goal. Had hearing on January 20th in House State

Government and Tribal Relations Committee, and executive session scheduled January 26th at 9am.

[HB 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. Would relieve taxpayers of the financial burden. Public hearing in House Environment and Energy Committee January 13, and executive session held January 21st.

[HB 1838](#) State Salmon Strategy 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.

[HB 1978](#) Concerning Shoreline Master Programs. Review and revision of SMP’s would be revised from 8 to 10 years. They are way behind now and need to catch up. Public hearing in the House Local Government Committee held January 19th, and executive session held January 21st.

[SB 5504](#) Discover Pass free days extended to other state recreation lands. This is a good idea. Public hearing in Senate Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources and Parks held on January 13th, and executive session held January 20th, passed and referred to Senate Rules Committee second reading.

[SB 5567](#) Concerning Commercial fishing. Includes use of Fish Traps, an innovative device to separate by-catch wild salmon and steelhead from hatchery fish, to return them to the ocean as caught by commercial fisherman. Public hearing held January 13th in the Senate Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources and Parks Committee and executive session held January 20th, substitute bill passed and referred to Senate Ways & Means Committee. Substitute removes the restriction on the use of pound nets, round haul nets, fish traps, fish wheels and certain other gear for catching salmon and steelhead.

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.

[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.

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@lwwwa.org.