



CCA

COASTAL CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION
WASHINGTON

1006 West 11th St.
Vancouver, WA 98660
Tel (877) 852-8772
Fax (877) 852-8774
www.CCAPNW.org

Good afternoon Chairman Blake and members of the committee. My name is Andrew Marks, vice chairman of CCA Washington's government relations committee and I appreciate the opportunity to join you today. This is the first bill related to selective salmon fisheries to come before you in many years and we appreciate Chairman Blake's willingness to bring this discussion before the committee.

We are beginning to make progress toward implementing fully selective fisheries to protect and promote conservation of our wild salmon, steelhead and other fish populations. This effort has enjoyed strong support from many of you, Governor Gregoire, WDFW staff, the Fish and Wildlife Commission and many others. The WDFW Commission recently adopted a Harvest and Hatchery Reform Policy based on the best available science related to reforming hatchery and harvest management to be consistent with recovery efforts. As you know, last year WDFW began testing some of the selective commercial gear needed to better protect Washington's endangered and threatened salmon and steelhead runs in the lower Columbia River.

This discussion -- and the need for reform -- extends beyond the lower Columbia River. In addition to the many listed runs in the upper Columbia, there are 22 populations of listed Chinook salmon in the Puget Sound Basin facing a similar challenge -- the need to harvest surplus hatchery fish while protecting the wild fish essential to recovery. Although the salmon are not yet ESA listed, similar problems exist in both Grays Harbor and Willapa Bay.

There are examples of progress. In addition to the Colvilles and the testing in the lower Columbia, a successful "permit-only" non-tribal commercial fishery has existed in Quilcene Bay, off Hood Canal since the mid 1990s, where abundant hatchery Coho have been harvested in beach seines while the co-mingled ESA-listed summer Chum salmon are released. This fishery was authorized under current authorities available to WDFW and has been a success biologically and commercially.

We do have several concerns with HB 2696 as it is currently drafted. In short, we believe the bill would actually limit the authority WDFW already has under law and establishes a process that fails to consider reforming existing non-selective fisheries and lacks appropriate integration with the science-based recommendations related to hatchery and harvest reform.

We recently discussed these concerns with Representative Blake and how we can foster a more collaborative discussion to ensure that WDFW can continue working with all stakeholders to implement these reforms. User groups have been too quick to argue over allocations, and less willing to discuss and achieve what should be the overarching concern: conservation and best practices by all. Conservation efforts by all can lead to recovery and fish for all -- a situation that once existed and we believe can exist again. That path to abundance lies in catching more hatchery salmon while protecting wild, unclipped salmon and other species from damage.

We believe this issue presents an immense opportunity for productive dialog among stakeholders and the public. The question is not whether, but how to implement the fully selective fishing methods needed to recover our wild salmon and steelhead stocks. Also here today are some of the commercial fishers who have been involved in the development and use of the selective gear being tested in the lower Columbia River and we applaud their efforts.

We look forward to continuing to work with this Committee, the Department and others in implementing these reforms. Thank you for this opportunity to discuss selective harvest with you today. Each of you has received a CCA information packet with more information about the need for sustainable selective fisheries Washington. I will be happy to respond to any questions the committee members may have.