

ALASKA SALMON RESEARCH TASK FORCE ACT

APRIL 25, 2022.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. GRIJALVA, from the Committee on Natural Resources,
submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 6651]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Natural Resources, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 6651) to establish an Alaska Salmon Research Task Force, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon without amendment and recommends that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of H.R. 6651 is to establish an Alaska Salmon Research Task Force.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

Since 2018, fourteen fisheries disasters have occurred in Alaska.¹ Nearly all these fisheries were salmon fisheries—highlighting a substantial decline in the abundance of salmon in the state. These developments have created a dire situation for Alaskans—including many Native communities, like those on the Yukon River, who rely on healthy salmon stocks to serve as food and income.

The Yukon River's summer 2021 chum run was devastatingly low: only 153,000 fish were counted, compared to 1.7 million in years past.² Additionally, Chinook salmon runs were recently also

¹Press Release, NOAA, Secretary of Commerce Issues Multiple Fishery Disaster Determinations for Alaska (Jan. 21, 2022), www.noaa.gov/news-release/secretary-of-commerce-issues-multiple-fishery-disaster-determinations-for-alaska.

²Advisory Announcement, Div. of Commercial Fisheries, Alaska Dep't of Fish & Game, 2021 Yukon River Salmon Summer Fishery Announcement #16, Summer Update #7, Yukon Area Salmon Fishery, at 2 (July 20, 2021), www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/applications/dfnewsrelease/1301954168.pdf.

the third-lowest in the state's history.³ These salmon are vital to Alaskans due to their supreme cultural, economic, and recreational value. Failing to conserve these salmon stocks would leave several Alaskan communities without income, traditions, and, most importantly: food.

H.R. 6651 would create a research task force to study the causes behind these disasters and identify priorities for salmon research and conservation efforts in Alaska. Specifically, the bill would create an Alaska Salmon Research Task Force, which would be responsible for publishing a report within one year identifying knowledge and research gaps and future research objectives for salmon in Alaska. The Research Task Force would be composed of 13 to 19 members, including representation from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, the U.S. section of the Pacific Salmon Commission, Alaskan residents, the Alaskan fishing industry, and other academic salmon experts. Recognizing the federal trust responsibility to Alaska Native subsistence rights, the Committee believes it is appropriate that the Secretary of Commerce ensure that at least one leader from a federally recognized tribe in Alaska is a member of the task force.

H.R. 6651 would direct the task force to create working groups on salmon returns at the regional or stock-focused level, characterize trends in productivity and abundance, and identify and prioritize scientific research needs. The task force would also address salmon returns by creating a coordinated salmon research strategy and support collaboration and coordination in salmon conservation efforts. Members of the research task force would serve without compensation, and the Secretary of Commerce would provide administrative support to the research task force and its workgroups. The research task force would be exempt from the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

COMMITTEE ACTION

H.R. 6651 was introduced on February 8, 2022, by Representative Don Young (R-AK). The bill was referred solely to the Committee on Natural Resources, and within the Committee to the Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife and the Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the United States. On March 17, 2022, the Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife held a hearing on the bill. On April 6, 2022, the Natural Resources Committee met to consider the bill. The Subcommittees were discharged by unanimous consent. No amendments were offered, and the bill was adopted and ordered favorably reported to the House of Representatives by unanimous consent.

HEARINGS

For the purposes of clause 3(c)(6) of House Rule XIII, the following hearing was used to develop or consider this measure: hearing by the Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife held on March 17, 2022.

³See *Low Runs of Chinook Salmon in Alaska*, ALASKA DEP'T OF FISH & GAME, www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=hottopics.lowchinookruns_info (updated June 2019).

COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Regarding clause 2(b)(1) of rule X and clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Natural Resources' oversight findings and recommendations are reflected in the body of this report.

COMPLIANCE WITH HOUSE RULE XIII AND CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET ACT

1. *Cost of Legislation and the Congressional Budget Act.* With respect to the requirements of clause 3(c)(2) and (3) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and sections 308(a) and 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee has received the following estimate for the bill from the Director of the Congressional Budget Office:

H.R. 6651, Alaska Salmon Research Task Force Act			
As ordered reported by the House Committee on Natural Resources on April 6, 2022			
By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars	2022	2022-2026	2022-2031
Direct Spending (Outlays)	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0
Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit	0	0	0
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)	*	*	not estimated
Statutory pay-as-you-go procedures apply?	No	Mandate Effects	
Increases on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2032?	No	Contains intergovernmental mandate?	No
		Contains private-sector mandate?	No
* = between zero and \$500,000			

H.R. 6651 would require the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to establish the Alaska Salmon Research Task Force to review existing research on Pacific salmon, identify areas where additional research is necessary, and support sustainable management of salmon in Alaska. The task force also would be required to establish at least one working group to study salmon migration in particular regions of western Alaska.

Within one year of the task force's establishment, the task force would be required to report to the Congress on its findings and any recommendations for additional areas of research that would benefit salmon sustainability. The bill would require that each member of the task force serve without compensation.

Using information about the cost of similar activities, CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 6651 would increase costs by less than \$500,000 over the 2022–2026 period because we expect that most activities of the task force would be completed without federal assistance.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Robert Reese. The estimate was reviewed by H. Samuel Papenfuss, Deputy Director of Budget Analysis.

2. *General Performance Goals and Objectives.* As required by clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII, the general performance goals and objectives of this bill are to establish an Alaska Salmon Research Task Force.

EARMARK STATEMENT

This bill does not contain any Congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined under clause 9(e), 9(f), and 9(g) of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

UNFUNDED MANDATES REFORM ACT STATEMENT

According to CBO, this bill contains no unfunded mandates as defined by the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act.

FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT STATEMENT

In reporting the bill favorably to the House of Representatives, the Committee on Natural Resources finds that the functions of the proposed Alaska Salmon Research Task Force would be better performed by such task force than by one or more agencies or another existing advisory committee.

EXISTING PROGRAMS

This bill does not establish or reauthorize a program of the federal government known to be duplicative of another program.

APPLICABILITY TO LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The Committee finds that the legislation does not relate to the terms and conditions of employment or access to public services or accommodations within the meaning of section 102(b)(3) of the Congressional Accountability Act.

PREEMPTION OF STATE, LOCAL, OR TRIBAL LAW

Any preemptive effect of this bill over state, local, or tribal law is intended to be consistent with the bill's purposes and text and the Supremacy Clause of Article VI of the U.S. Constitution.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

If enacted, this bill would make no changes to existing law.

SUPPLEMENTAL, MINORITY, ADDITIONAL, OR DISSENTING VIEWS

None.