



"The New Voice of Salmon"
1370 Auto Center Drive
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May 17, 2014

Assemblymember Mark Stone
State Capitol Room 5155
Sacramento CA 94249

Dear Assemblyman Stone:

In our meeting of May 8th you requested that GGSA provide additional specifics as to why we oppose AB2684. Attached are additional concerns and a partial list of the salmon groups and businesses that oppose the bill.

We remain convinced that AB2684 is not in the best interests of the salmon, the salmon industry and the agencies that are trying to recover the wild and the hatchery stocks. We urge that this bill be deferred in favor of a more comprehensive approach in the future.

Yours Truly

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John McManus".

John McManus
Executive Director
John@Goldengatesalmon.org

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Pool".

Richard Pool
Secretary
Rbpool@protroll.com.

cc. Alfredo Arredondo

Salmon Interests Oppose AB 2684
“The “Hatchery Practices Bill”
Authored by Assemblyman Mark Stone of Santa Cruz
5/16/2014

Summary

This bill, which will cost millions, would severely damage the efforts of the salmon industry and the fish agencies to recover the salmon runs. The bill is now working its way through the Legislature. It was authored by Assemblyman Mark Stone of Santa Cruz and would require the insertion of coded wire identification tags in every hatchery salmon in the state. The Golden Gate Salmon Association has analyzed the bill and finds it will be very expensive, does very little for the salmon and will severely interfere with hatchery and wild fish production and the rebuilding projects underway by GGSA, the fishery agencies, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and others. For these reasons, the Golden Gate Salmon Association strongly opposes AB 2684.

Analysis

The bill quietly passed the Assembly Water Parks and Wildlife Committee on April, 8th 2014 with no opposition. It is now before the Assembly Appropriations Committee and if it passes, will go to the Assembly Floor. No one in the salmon industry was ever consulted on the language of the bill. It is a very damaging bill and needs to be defeated.

- On April 8th Mr. Stone, the author, testified that the bill will allow adult wild salmon and hatchery salmon to be separated at weirs and hatcheries by a magnetic reader which will recognize the coded wire tag in the fish and automatically send the two different fish into different channels. GGSA is unaware of any reliable technology to do this.
- Starting in 2007, all the California salmon hatcheries instituted a program to coded wire tag and mark 25% of the hatchery salmon. When the tagged fish are caught or return, they can be identified as to the hatchery where they originated. If they stray to other hatcheries or to wild spawning areas, the degree of that straying can be determined. The 25% program is working well and is providing key management

data. Tagging 100% of the hatchery salmon would contribute nothing more to the data already compiled with the existing program.

- The author proposes to charge the additional tagging costs to the dam mitigators which are DWR, The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and East Bay MUD. The biggest fallacy in AB 2684 is that it assumes that its costs can be put on these agencies and that no other salmon programs will be impacted. Current spending programs and priorities suggest exactly the opposite is true. East Bay MUD has been a pioneer in investing large sums of its money in improved hatchery production and to improve release and return practices. Its hatchery yield and ocean return results now lead every salmon hatchery in the state. There is no question that extracting large sums of coded wire tag money from this agency will cut their hatchery production and will also cut their research into new innovations.
- The Bureau of Reclamation now funds more salmon improvements than any agency in the state. They administer the \$50 million annual CVPIA fund which targets the doubling of the wild salmon populations. They are now funding important improvement projects for all the fish agencies and for GGSA. In 2007 they voluntarily agreed to fund the 25% fractional marking program for the Nimbus and Coleman hatcheries. In 2014 they budgeted \$866,000 out of the CVPIA fund for that purpose. With 100% tagging, this bill would increase to over \$3 million. Highly productive salmon rebuilding projects are stacked up for several years waiting for CVPIA funding. They help all the hatcheries and the wild salmon in several ways. Extracting large coded wire tagging payments from the Bureau would almost certainly cut hatchery and wild fish production and would grind many improvement projects to a halt. It is a bad idea.
- DWR has a number of important salmon improvement projects waiting for funding in the Feather River system and in the hatchery. The additional mitigation costs would cause DWR to further delay these improvements and it may also have to curtail the hatchery production.

- The Central Valley hatcheries currently produce approximately 33 million salmon smolts annually. GGSA estimates that the additional tagging facilities for 100% tagging would cost in the order of \$25 million and the tagging and reading of the tags would add in the order of \$15 million annually over and above the 25% program. Installing tag readers and diversion channels at hatcheries and weirs would cost many millions more and would take years to construct. All the fishery agency budgets are currently highly constrained and there are no funds to apply to this unproductive proposal.
- The author testified that 100% marking would allow the separation of hatchery and wild fish. To do this in the open Central Valley rivers and tributaries, the river flow would have to be channelized into narrow openings with the fish ending up swimming through a pipe. The manufacturer of the magnetic reading equipment says that a fish must be no further from the reader than 5.5 centimeters (2.2 inches) for the equipment to work. There is no way structures like this could be put in the Sacramento River or major tributaries. The author's proposed separation will not work in the areas where separation would be the most desirable.
- The Coleman hatchery sits approximately eight miles up Battle Creek from the confluence with the main stem of the Sacramento. In 2010 and 2011, 7,392 tagged fall-run salmon returned to the Coleman hatchery. 431 of the original Coleman tagged fish did not return to the hatchery but swam past Battle Creek and went to the upper Sacramento River. The author's proposal a) doesn't cover Coleman hatchery fish since Coleman is owned and operated by the federal government but b) even it did, this program would never separate these fish. It simply cannot be done.
- In those same two years 21,120 tagged fall-run fish returned to the Feather River hatchery. 597 of them strayed into the Yuba River. This is the same situation as above. There is no way the author's proposal would change this. The Coleman and Feather examples are two significant stray points where AB 2684 fails to accomplish anything.

- GGSA met with Mr. Stone and his staff. GGSA reviewed its concerns and reasons for its opposition. Mr. Stone ask for more specifics and indicated he is proposing an amendment that will ensure that the hatchery mitigators have to pay the coded wire tagging bills.

Opponents of AB 2684

- Golden Gate Salmon Association – Represents the salmon coalition interests of commercial, recreational, charters, wholesalers, retailers and manufacturers. John Mc Manus, Executive Director, John@goldengatesalmon.org
- The Golden Gate Fishermen’s Association – The offshore charter fleet carrying 250,000 salmon fishermen annually. 130 vessels from Fort Bragg to Monterey Bay. Roger Thomas, President, Suedupuis@aol.com .
- Water4fish.org - A salmon advocacy group with 86,000 participants. Dick Pool, President, Rbpool@protroll.com .
- PCFFA - The commercial salmon fleet trade association. Zeke Grader, Executive Director, Zgrader@ifrfish.org.
- Additional opponents will be listed in the near future.