

SAFE for Salmon

A Win-Win Solution for Jobs & Communities



General:

LC 3816 seeks to strike a win-win solution to optimizing Columbia River salmon harvest between sport and commercial interests. The bill calls for moving the non-tribal commercial gillnet fleet in the lower-Columbia River (below Bonneville Dam) into off-channel “SAFE” (Select Area Fisheries Enhancement) areas. These areas are currently in use and are productive.

The Objective:

By moving the non-tribal commercial gillnet fleet into these off-channel, SAFE areas, important sport fishing seasons would be expanded and with those seasons significant and meaningful economic benefits to rural communities, the sportfishing industry, hotels, boat dealers, equipment manufacturers, boat builders, restaurants and fishing guides would all be realized.

Core Concerns:

- **Will this put the non-tribal commercial gillnet industry out of business?** No, the intent of this bill is not to ban gillnetting in the Columbia River. These SAFE areas have proved to be viable and were originally recommended by the federal government to move the commercial gillnet fleet out of the main stem Columbia and into these off-channel areas.
- **Is this an experiment?** No, the SAFE areas are currently in use and producing well. Last year’s spring Chinook harvest in the SAFE areas yielded almost 24,000 salmon for the commercial gillnet fleet. This level of harvest makes the SAFE areas an unconditional success.
- **How will this affect the tribes?** The Columbia River Treaty Tribes are assured their catch through US v. Oregon. Additionally, they have received even greater assurances through a “catch-balancing” agreement with the states that applies additional harvest buffers to the sport and commercial fleet so the tribes get the fish they have been promised.
- **What are the benefits?** A 2009 study by Southwick & Associates, one of the preeminent firms in the nation in fisheries and wildlife economics, indicated that the implementation of SAFE For Salmon would “represent an increase of 56.5% over the levels of expenditures that actually occurred. Each year anglers would have spent approximately \$11.6 million more... As a result of the additional angler expenditures, 179 additional jobs would have been supported each year, along with \$3.0 million in additional state and local tax revenues.” The study goes on to say, “It is important to note that equipment expenses such as boats, rods and reels, tackle, etc., are not included... Therefore, only travel-related expenditures such as food, fuel, lodging, etc., are included in this analysis. To the degree that equipment sales would increase, the results reported here are an underestimate and can be considered conservative.”

Tell your state representatives that you want SAFE for Salmon!!!

For further details, contact the Association of Northwest Steelheaders office at 503-653-4176, office@anws.org.