House Bill 2610

Sponsored by Representative BREESE-IVERSION; Representatives NEARMAN, RESCHKE, SMITH DB (Presession filed.)

SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure as introduced.

Provides that State Fish and Wildlife Commission may waive requirement that artificial obstruction in waters of this state provide for fish passage if commission determines that artificial obstruction will be repaired or replaced and is less than eight feet tall, or that artificial obstruction is dam that provides hydropower, drinking water or water for irrigation use, artificial obstruction provides fish habitat and providing for fish passage would increase cost of project by more than 10 percent.

Removes requirement that commission periodically review exemptions from fish passage requirement. Removes commission authority to revoke or amend exemption upon finding that relevant requirements for exemption no longer apply.

A BILL FOR AN ACT

Relating to fish passage; amending ORS 509.585.

Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:

SECTION 1. ORS 509.585 is amended to read:

509.585. (1) It is the policy of the State of Oregon to provide for upstream and downstream passage for native migratory fish and the Legislative Assembly finds that cooperation and collaboration between public and private entities is necessary to accomplish the policy goal of providing passage for native migratory fish and to achieve the enhancement and restoration of Oregon’s native salmonid populations, as envisioned by the Oregon Plan. Therefore, except as provided in ORS chapter 509, fish passage is required in all waters of this state in which native migratory fish are currently or have historically been present.

(2) Except as otherwise provided by this section or ORS 509.645, a person owning or operating an artificial obstruction may not construct or maintain any artificial obstruction across any waters of this state that are inhabited, or historically inhabited, by native migratory fish without providing passage for native migratory fish.

(3) The State Department of Fish and Wildlife shall complete and maintain a statewide inventory of artificial obstructions in order to prioritize enforcement actions based on the needs of native migratory fish. This prioritization shall include, but need not be limited to, the degree of impact of the artificial obstruction on the native migratory fish, the biological status of the native migratory fish stocks in question and any other factor established by the department by rule. The department shall establish a list of priority projects for enforcement purposes. Priority artificial obstructions are subject to the State Fish and Wildlife Commission’s authority as provided in ORS 509.625. Unless requested by persons owning or operating an artificial obstruction, the department shall primarily direct its enforcement authority toward priority projects, emergencies and projects described in subsection (4) of this section. The priority project list shall be subject to periodic review and amendment by the department and to formal review and amendment by the commission no less frequently than once every five years.

NOTE: Matter in boldfaced type in an amended section is new; matter in italic and bracketed is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in boldfaced type.

LC 3044
(4) A person owning or operating an artificial obstruction shall, prior to construction, fundamental change in permit status or abandonment of the artificial obstruction in any waters of this state, obtain a determination from the department as to whether native migratory fish are or historically have been present in the waters. If the department determines that native migratory fish are or historically have been present in the waters, the person owning or operating the artificial obstruction shall either submit a proposal for fish passage to the department or apply for a waiver pursuant to subsection (7) of this section. Approval of the proposed fish passage facility or of the alternatives to fish passage must be obtained from the department prior to construction, permit modification or abandonment of the artificial obstruction.

(5) Consistent with the purpose and goals of the Oregon Plan, the department shall seek cooperative partnerships to remedy fish passage problems and to ensure that problems are corrected as soon as possible. The department and the person owning or operating the artificial obstruction are encouraged to negotiate the terms and conditions of fish passage or alternatives to fish passage, including appropriate cost sharing. The negotiations may include, but are not limited to, consideration of equitable factors.

(6) The department shall submit a proposed determination of the required fish passage or alternatives to fish passage to the commission for approval. The determination may be the result of the negotiations described in subsection (5) of this section or, if no agreement was reached in the negotiations, a determination proposed by the department. If a protest is not filed within the time period specified in ORS 509.645, the proposed determination shall become a final order.

(7)(a) The commission shall waive the requirement for fish passage if the commission determines that the alternatives to fish passage proposed by the person owning or operating the artificial obstruction provide a net benefit to native migratory fish.

(b) Net benefit to native migratory fish is determined under this subsection by comparing the benefit to native migratory fish that would occur if the artificial obstruction had fish passage to the benefit to native migratory fish that would occur using the proposed alternatives to fish passage. Alternatives to fish passage must result in a benefit to fish greater than that provided by the artificial obstruction with fish passage. The net benefit to fish shall be determined based upon conditions that exist at the time of comparison.

(c) The State Fish and Wildlife Director shall develop rules establishing general criteria for determining the adequacy of fish passage and of alternatives to fish passage. The general criteria shall include, but not be limited to:

- The geographic scope in which alternatives must be conducted;
- The type and quality of habitat;
- The species affected;
- The status of the native migratory fish stocks;
- Standards for monitoring, evaluating and adaptive management;
- The feasibility of fish passage and alternatives to fish passage;
- Quantified baseline conditions;
- Historic conditions;
- Existing native migratory fish management plans;
- Financial or other incentives and the application of incentives;
- Data collection and evaluation; and
- Consistency with the purpose and goals of the Oregon Plan.

(d) To the extent feasible, the department shall coordinate its requirements for adequate fish
passage or alternatives to fish passage with any federal requirements.

[(8)] (e) A person owning or operating an artificial obstruction may at any time petition the commission to waive the requirement for fish passage in exchange for agreed-upon alternatives to fish passage that provide a net benefit to native migratory fish as determined in this subsection [(7) of this section].

(8)(a) A person owning or operating an artificial obstruction may petition the commission to waive the requirement for fish passage.

(b) The commission shall waive the requirement for fish passage if the commission determines:

(A) That the artificial obstruction will be repaired or replaced and is less than eight feet tall; or

(B) That:

(i) The artificial obstruction is a dam that provides hydropower, drinking water or water for irrigation use;

(ii) The artificial obstruction creates fish habitat; and

(iii) Providing for fish passage would increase the cost of a project by more than 10 percent.

(9)(a) Artificial obstructions without fish passage are exempt from the requirement to provide fish passage if the commission:

(A) Finds that a lack of fish passage has been effectively mitigated;

(B) Has granted a legal waiver for the artificial obstruction; or

(C) Finds there is no appreciable benefit to providing fish passage.

(b) The commission shall review, at least once every seven years, the artificial obstructions exempted under this subsection that do not have an exemption expiration date to determine whether the exemption should be renewed. The commission may revoke or amend an exemption if it finds that circumstances have changed such that the relevant requirements for the exemption no longer apply. The person owning or operating the artificial obstruction may protest the decision by the commission pursuant to ORS 509.645.

(10) If the fundamental change in permit status is an expiration of a license of a federally licensed hydroelectric project, the commission’s determination shall be submitted to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission as required by ORS 543A.060 to 543A.410.

(11) To the extent that the requirements of this section are preempted by the Federal Power Act or by the laws governing hydroelectric projects located in waters governed jointly by Oregon and another state, federally licensed hydroelectric projects are exempt from the requirements of this section.

(12) A person subject to a decision of the commission under this section shall have the right to a contested case hearing according to the applicable provisions of ORS chapter 183.