

DRAFT

SUMMARY

Digest: The Act stops the lottery for Columbia River gillnet fishing permits. The Act directs an agency to create a short-term program for buying the permits from willing sellers. The Act directs an agency to report on a due date on creating a long-term version of the program. The Act goes into effect when the Governor signs it. (Flesch Readability Score: 63.2).

Eliminates the lottery for Columbia River gillnet vessel permits.

Directs the State Fish and Wildlife Commission to establish a Columbia River gillnet vessel permit purchase program that ends on January 2, 2026.

Directs the State Department of Fish and Wildlife to report to interim committees of the Legislative Assembly that relate to natural resources, on or before September 15, 2024, on establishing a Columbia River gillnet vessel permit buyback program.

Declares an emergency, effective on passage.

A BILL FOR AN ACT

1
2 Relating to Columbia River fisheries; creating new provisions; amending ORS
3 508.778; repealing ORS 508.792; and declaring an emergency.

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

5 **SECTION 1. ORS 508.792 is repealed.**

6 **SECTION 2. ORS 508.778 is amended to read:**

7 508.778. [*Except as provided in ORS 508.792, no*] **On or after the effec-**
8 **tive date of this 2024 Act,** new vessel permits [*shall*] **may not** be issued.

9 **SECTION 3. (1) As used in this section:**

10 (a) **“Columbia River gillnet vessel permit” means a permit required**
11 **by ORS 508.775.**

12 (b) **“Inactive permit” means a Columbia River gillnet vessel permit**
13 **not used for Columbia River salmon landings in any calendar year**

1 from 2021 to 2025.

2 (2) The State Fish and Wildlife Commission shall establish a pro-
3 gram to purchase inactive permits. Under the program, the State De-
4 partment of Fish and Wildlife may:

5 (a) Solicit voluntary offers from holders of inactive permits;

6 (b) Rank offers according to price and 2021 to 2025 average annual
7 Columbia River salmon gillnet landings;

8 (c) Purchase inactive permits based on the lowest price per average
9 annual landings first; and

10 (d) Accept offers of no more than \$20,000.

11 (3) The department shall retire all inactive permits purchased under
12 subsection (2) of this section.

13 (4) Notwithstanding ORS 508.793, a person may not transfer or sell
14 an inactive permit except as provided in subsection (2) of this section.

15 (5) A person that sells an inactive permit to the department under
16 subsection (2) of this section may not hold a Columbia River gillnet
17 vessel permit after the date on which the inactive permit was sold.

18 (6) The commission may adopt rules as needed to implement this
19 section.

20 SECTION 4. Section 3 of this 2024 Act is repealed on January 2, 2026.

21 SECTION 5. (1) As used in this section:

22 (a) “Active permit” means a Columbia River gillnet vessel permit
23 used for Columbia River salmon landings in any calendar year from
24 2021 to 2025.

25 (b) “Columbia River gillnet vessel permit” means a permit required
26 by ORS 508.775.

27 (c) “Inactive permit” means a Columbia River gillnet vessel permit
28 not used for Columbia River salmon landings in any calendar year
29 from 2021 to 2025.

30 (2) On or before September 15, 2024, the State Department of Fish
31 and Wildlife shall report, in the manner described in ORS 192.245, to

1 interim committees of the Legislative Assembly that relate to natural
2 resources on the Columbia River gillnet fishery.

3 (3) The report must include, but need not be limited to:

4 (a) An analysis of Columbia River gillnet vessel permit holders,
5 separated by mainstem and Select Area Fishery Enhancement Project
6 areas, that distinguishes between active permits and inactive permits,
7 as determined by salmon landings, other fish landings and value esti-
8 mates, since 2017.

9 (b) The number and species of smolts released in the Select Area
10 Fishery Enhancement Project areas.

11 (c) Estimates of the escapement of endangered and wild salmon
12 stocks and of the number of hatchery-reared salmon available for
13 recreational angling, based on Columbia River commercial gillnet
14 landings since 2017.

15 (d) A description of annual revenues from Columbia River endorse-
16 ment fees.

17 (e) Recommendations on transitioning to live release selective
18 fishing gears or other gears that may benefit wild salmon conserva-
19 tion.

20 (f) A description of options for structuring a Columbia River gillnet
21 vessel permit buyback program, including a reverse auction system.

22 (g) Estimates of the level of funding needed to buy back active
23 permits and inactive permits offered by willing sellers.

24 (h) Recommendations on any changes to statutes, rules and funding
25 levels that would be needed to implement a buyback program that is
26 intended to retire active permits and inactive permits and reduce
27 gillnet harvest levels in mainstem fisheries, including potential meas-
28 ures to prohibit persons who sell active permits or inactive permits
29 under the program from reentering the Columbia River gillnet fishery.

30 (i) Analysis of how well a Columbia River gillnet vessel permit
31 buyback program would complement the Columbia River license re-

1 **duction program operated by the Washington Department of Fish and**
2 **Wildlife.**

3 **(4) All recommendations in the report must be consistent with all**
4 **fishery management agreements between tribes and the State of**
5 **Oregon.**

6 **SECTION 6. This 2024 Act being necessary for the immediate pres-**
7 **ervation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is de-**
8 **clared to exist, and this 2024 Act takes effect on its passage.**

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