

Senate Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources January 20, 1991 -  
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report a speaker's exact words. For complete contents of the  
proceedings, please refer to the tapes.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

March 08, 1991Hearing Room C 8:30 a.m.  
Tapes 72 - 74

MEMBERS PRESENT:Sen. Dick Springer Sen. Joyce Cohen, Vice-Chair  
Sen. John Brenneman Sen. Shirley Gold Sen. Bob Kintigh Sen. Tricia  
Smith Sen. Eugene Timms

STAFF PRESENT: Peter Green, Committee Administrator Chris Beck,  
Research Associate Stuart Farmer, Committee Assistant

MEASURES CONSIDERED: SB 609 - Requires Tag to Angle of  
Halibut, PH SB 611 - Establishes State Policy Regarding Commercial  
Harvesting of Fish, PH

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TAPE 71, SIDE A

004 CHAIR SPRINGER CALLS THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 8:15 AM. introduces  
Sen Brenneman to speak on SB 609.

SB 609 - Requires Tag to Angle for Halibut, PH Witnesses: Senator John  
Brenneman, Dist. 2 John Mohr, General Manager of the Port of Newport  
Jeff Curtis, Fisheries Division of the Oregon Department of Fish &  
Wildlife

055 SEN. BRENNEMAN: introduces SB 609, bill implementing a \$5.00 for a  
halibut tag and the amount allowed to catch, also creates a Halibut  
Research Account to be used only for halibut population studies and  
other research.

079 JOHN MOHR: General Manager of the Port of Newport, to speak in favor  
of SB 609 (See Exhibit A).

093 CHAIR SPRINGER: asks for a summary of the last five years of the  
halibut fisheries.

101 MOHR: the commercial charter has greatly increased over the past  
five years. We have found that the quotas have been taken every year.  
There is a general feeling the populations may be under estimated at  
this point.

112 CHAIR SPRINGER: what is your sense of the number of individuals

engaged in the charter operation of halibut fishing?

116 MOHR: we have found that the commercial fisherman have been very supportive in the Newport area however they feel that there is some good information that could be garnered from the population research.

126 CHAIR SPRINGER: can you tell us what it costs for an average day of charter fishing ?

130 MOHR: believes that it costs on average \$125 a day per person.

142 JEFF CURTIS: from the Department of Fish and Wildlife to speak in support of SB 609. The money raised by the tags should bring in \$10,000 to \$30,000. Recommends two changes: remove the language that mandates the annual limit of halibut, and believes that a separate sub- account is unnecessary.

188 CHAIR SPRINGER: moves to a work session on SB 611 and recognizes Sen. Kennemer.

SB 611 - Establishes State Policy regarding Commercial Harvesting of Fish, PH Witnesses: Senator Bill Kennemer, Dist. 12 Representative Larry Sowa, Dist. 26 Representative Dave McTige, Dist. 25 Representative Jackie Taylor, Dist 2 Joe Easley, Clatsop Economic Development Committee Senator Joan Dukes, Dist. 1 Willis Van Dusen, Mayor of Astoria, Oregon Liz Moschgianis Guy Schoenborn, President of Larry's Sports Stephen Koler, Professional Fishing Guide Bob Eaton, Salmon For All, Inc. Fay Tenson, Salmon For All, Inc. Jim Hogan, Commercial Fisherman Mark Viewgous, Ocean Foods Inc. Doug Honeycut, Sportfisherman Lendal Healy, Sportfisherman Varnal Teshner, Sellwood Salmon Society Stephen Phillips, Pacific Salmon Sportfishing Council Marrel Sterns, Sportfisherman Joseph Taylor, U of O graduate student Brenda Wall, Commercial Fisherman Bruce Hansen, Restoration Enhancement Board John Smelick, Sportfisherman Jack Merricknovich, Columbia River Fisheries Protectory Union Terry Salo, Commercial Fisherman Stan Johnson, Commercial Fisherman Steve Fick, Fish Processor Jim Bergeron, OSU Sea Grant Agent Dave Harlan, Port of Astoria

202 SEN. KENNEMER: suggest amendment SB 611-1. (See Exhibit B & C). Feels that it is vital to preserve the wild fish. Bill is proposed to prevent drop kill due to gill netting. The bill also addresses the use of modern technology to harvest fish. The result is more fish for both commercial and wild fish. Also is designed to prevent the federal government from declaring the salmon and other fisheries from being regulating the fisheries as an endangered species.

335 SEN. BRENNEMAN: Do you have any research documenting the damaging the resource?

342 SEN. KENNEMER: in the testimony that follows you will have some specific evidence. This is not an assault on the gill net industry, the issue is the management on the resource.

350 SEN. BRENNEMAN: what would do with the fisherman that you are prohibiting from working?

354 SEN. KENNEMER: reflects to his own experience with his grandfather. These are sensitive issue that deal with peoples livelihood. In the preservation of a resource we must all make tough choices. Oregonians are hardy people and they will find what ever they need to do to make it.

413 REP. SOWA: Last year the commercial fishing industry was limited on the Columbia river to about 12,000 fish. This legislation does not close the fishing industry it simply changes the methods presently used to harvest the fish. Something is wrong when we have a fish harvesting system that makes it necessary to look at not harvesting fish because a certain segment of the run is endangered.

TAPE 72, SIDE A.

041 REP. DAVE McTIGE: has been supportive of this concept for many years. In 1987 there came a reevaluation of the economics of the sport fishing economy in the Metro area as impacted by a loss of fish coming up the river. This report is available from the Department of Fish & Wildlife, at the minimum the report doubled the previous economic impact estimates of the value of the Willamette Spring Chinook sport fishery. Is very concerned about the incidental catch of steelhead and sturgeon and in the long run it makes sense to look at terminal fishery concept as the most efficient and selective method of harvesting the excess fish that come about. The method of harvesting fish in Oregon need to be examined in light of the pressures on the Columbia River system and our need to address the threatened and endangered species that are soon to be listed.

087 REP. JACKIE TAYLOR: testifies against SB 611 (See Exhibit D & E). Sports fishing is very important to her district. Many different effects on the diminishing of the salmon population. The critical issue at stake is how we the present inhabitants of the river can best protect and enhance the natural resource of fish. This will demand a great deal of cooperation between sports and commercial; fisherman as well as the native people who fish by treaty and natural rights. Is worried that Oregon gillnetters will be standing on the banks of the Columbia river watching fishermen from Washington reap a larger harvest. Sport and commercial fisherman in her district work together to protect and enhance the resource and habitat issues.

164 JOE EASLEY: speaks against SB 611. The fisheries are the major source of income for Clatsop County. This bill would transfer a resource to some people we can't catch what they are allocated. Out of the spring run the sports fishermen are only catching 60% - 70% of their allotment and the rest is going on to the hatcheries.

200 SEN. COHEN: why haven't we come up with a method of salvage the drop out rate of fish from gill netting.

209 EASLEY: there is other gear that would not create such a high drop out rate but sportsmen and commercials outlawed fish traps many years ago by referendum.

225 SEN. BRENNEMAN: is there any fishery that doesn't have an incidental kill.

230 EASLEY: None.

239 SEN. SMITH: believes that proponents of the bill say that they are putting the bill forward to protect non target fish and wild fish runs. The opponents of the bill are saying that the intent of the bill is by the sports fisherman to eliminate the commercial fisherman. Please address the topic of non target fishing in terms of is there way for gillnetters in the Columbia to reduce the incidental catch of wild fish or non target fish?

254 EASLEY: they are allocated a certain amount of a run. Those runs control what they catch in many cases. Commercial fisherman have not been able to fulfill their quotas due to the impact on up river runs.

260 SEN. SMITH: so the more fish that are not meant to be caught that are caught, the fewer fish you are aiming for you can catch, is that correct?

263 EASLEY: that is correct.

266 REP. TAYLOR: timing of the fishing season is designed to protect many species of fish to go most un-restricted up river.

297 SEN. DUKES: speaks against SB 611 (See Exhibits F & G). This bill will take many jobs out of the economy. Points out that the Washington fishermen could still fish the Columbia River. Feels that this bill will

seriously reduce the states economy. The city of Astoria brings in \$30,000,000 per year. The fishermen have voluntarily reduced the season to protect the resource. No one has mentioned the effect to the processors and the revenue that they generate for the state. If you really want to protect the wild fish, remove the dams and the hatcheries and all of the commercial fisheries. You don't just target a bill to get rid of gillnetters.

TAPE 71, SIDE B.

021 MAYOR WILLIS VAN DUSEN: Points out that the city has major vacancies in the down town area. Mill has just shut down. We can not afford any more shut down of industry in the community. Every commercial fishing boat in the harbor is a small business that pays taxes and contributes much revenue to the community.

065 SEN. TIMMS: Is it true that Washington has no restrictions against gillnet.

070 SEN. DUKES: we have shorted the seasons, they have changed the net size. Is concerned about the methods as to determining the amount of fish in the river. Feels that they have done a great deal to produce more hatchery fish.

119 SEN. KINTIGH: how do the fish actually get to the market and how the ultimate consumers are?

122 SEN. DUKES: the ultimate consumers are the people who don't have the time to catch their own fish. The commercial fishermen catch the fish and deliver them the processor who in turn processes the fish and sells them.

202 LIZ MOSCHOGIANIS: speaks in favor of SB 611 (See Exhibit H). The wild runs of Coho Salmon are virtually extinct. Only 300 adult escaped over the North Fork dam. Historically 50% of the wild run returned in November, this year only 9% of the run did return. Once more than 80% of these fish returned prior to December 31, the numbers that escape the commercial harvest are down to 25%.

282 GUY SCHOENBORN: speaks in support of SB 611 (See Exhibit I). the Independent Economic Survey done for the Department of Fish & Wildlife showed that sportfishing of the Willamette bound spring Chinook brought in 12.1 million dollars, commercial fishing of this stock brought in 1.8 million dollars.

TAPE 72, SIDE B.

019 STEPHEN KOLER: fishing guide on the Columbia River (See Exhibit J). Speaks in support of SB 6111.

090 SEN. DUKES: asks if he believes that by removing the gillnetting on the Columbia river that he would see a greater business.

092 KOLER: no, we don't get paid by the number of fish caught. We simply provide an opportunity to catch fish.

121 SEN. BRENNEMAN: do you believe that there is a great influence on the supply of steelhead due to the presence of high seas driftnets ?

127 KOLER: yes, if we have all of the problems out there with the high driftnet fishery out in the ocean why have several miles of net in the Columbia.

137 MOSCHOGIANIS: the winter nets go in the river at the peak of the wild stealhead run.

195 BOB EATON: discusses the technical characteristics of gillnet. Shows pieces of gill nets. Indicates that the nets have been designed to let stealhead go through the nets. Discusses seasons. The net mortality for sturgeon according to the ODF&W is almost immeasurable, the hooking

mortality from sportfishermen is probably higher than netting. Information that was obtained at the "Salmon Summit" stated that 95% to 98% of all the Snake River fish that have been listed in these petitions die at the dams. Does not believe that this bill is a conservation bill.

TAPE 73, SIDE A.

070 FAY TENSON: represents the commercial fishing industry. Speaks against SB 611. Believes that this bill would seriously limit the sport fishing quantity as well. The bill is viewed as an anti commercial fishing bill. The conservation issues are already covered in state statutes. By creating a sportfishing priority this bill will have a dramatic effect on fisheries management. The sponsors of this bill wish to eliminate the commercial and economic benefits that accrue to the citizens of the state. This bill will also effect hatchery management.

252 JIM HOGAN: a commercial fisherman speaking against SB 611. Feels that the Oregon legislator is a greater threat than mother nature. Feels that there is a threat to the culture of the Oregon fishing family.

324 MARK VIEWGOUS: believes that SB 611 is designed to eliminate commercial fishing. Feels that the state will lose tax revenue from the closure of seafood processing plants and that the state will be faced with larger unemployment.

TAPE 74, SIDE A.

024 DOUG HONEYCUT: sports fisherman speaking in support of SB 611. Doesn't want to see people lose their jobs, isn't against commercial fishing but is opposed to gillnetting.

035 LENDAL HEALY: states that he has been involved in this issue since 1959. Feels that the resource is in grave danger. First bill that he has seen that tries to improve the resource rather than a fight over who gets how many fish.

099 VARNAL TESHNER: speaks in support of SB 611. Doesn't wish to see the gillnetters go unemployed and is concerned about the viability of the species.

155 STEVEN PHILLIPS: fisheries biologist speaking in support of SB 611. Provides several examples of marine species that have become extinct.

209 SEN. SMITH: if this legislation is passed would you believe that we would see an increase in Washington gillnet fishing.

217 PHILLIPS: yes. We are talking about a limited entry legislation with the commercial fishing industry.

243 MARREL STERNS: agrees with Steven Phillips.

255 JOSEPH TAYLOR: a graduate student at University of Oregon speaks against SB 611 (See Exhibit K) from a historical point of view.

331 BRENDA WALL: speaks against SB 611 (See Exhibit L). Commercial fisherman who is a full time resident of the coast. Believes that the pollution problem is a greater concern to the management of the resource rather than the commercial fishing industry.

396 BRUCE HANSEN: speaks against SB 611. Third generation fisherman in the Portland area. On the Board of the Restoration Enhancement Commission. Would like to see the corp of engineer would build fish ladders on all of the dams.

TAPE 73, SIDE B.

030 JOHN SMELICK: speaks in support of SB 611. Doesn't believe the gillnetters when they say that the nets do not trap steelhead. Fishing seasons are very short and bad this year.

094 JACK MERICKNOVICH: testifies against SB 611. Has worked with the groups on the other side of the issue to try to work out a compromise.

177 TERRY SALO: testifies against SB 611. Brings up the issue of sea lions and seals. Tag issue.

205 STAN JOHNSON: speaks against SB 611 and feels that this is not a conservation bill. The commercial fisherman are the group responsible for getting fish ladders over Bonneville Dam, pushed for the clean up of the river.

249 STEVE FICK: a processor from Astoria. Is concerned about the bidding process for the fish thus creating a problem with filling their orders.

294 JIM BERGERON: staff of Oregon State University Sea Grant Program, speaks against SB 611. provides information about gillnet fisheries in various states. Created the documentary video on the heritage and views of the older commercial fisherman that have watched the industry develop and change. Relates the failures of a research project designed to create a better fish trap.

TAPE 74, SIDE B.

020 DAVE HARLAN: Port of Astoria speaks against SB 611 (See Exhibit M). Commercial fishing industry accounts for a quarter of the personal income of Clatsop county. Feels that SB 611 is an anti-business bill.

070 SEN. KENNEMER: rebuttle; the guts of the issue is a selective harvest.

085 CHAIR SPRINGER: thanks all that testified for their involvement and their orderly behavior. Adjourns meeting at 11:30.

Prepared by

Reviewed by

Stuart Farmer  
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Peter Green Committee  
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EXHIBIT LOG:

A - Testimony of the Port of Newport - John MoHR- 1 Page B - SB 611-1 Amendments - Sen. Bill Kennemer - 1 Page C - SB 611-1 Hand Engrossed - Sen. Bill Kennemer - 1 Page D - Letter from the Clatsop County Economic Development Committee - Rep. Jackie Taylor - 1 Page E - Letter from the Astoria Chamber of Commerce - Rep. Jackie Taylor - 1 Page F - Letter from the Astoria Chamber of Commerce - Sen. Joan Dukes - 1 Page G - Letter from the Clatsop County Economic Development Committee - Sen. Joan Dukes - 1 Page H - Testimony of Liz Moschogianis - Liz Moschogianis - 2 Pages I - Testimony of Guy Schoenborn - Guy Schoenborn - 4 Pages J - Testimony of Stephen Koler - Stephen Koler - 2 Pages K - Testimony of Joseph Taylor - Joseph Taylor - 3 Pages L - Testimony of Brenda Wall - Brenda Wall - 1 Page M - Testimony for the Port of Astoria - Dave Harlan - 2 Pages