

117TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 6651

To establish an Alaska Salmon Research Task Force.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 8, 2022

Mr. YOUNG introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

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## A BILL

To establish an Alaska Salmon Research Task Force.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Alaska Salmon Re-  
5 search Task Force Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. PURPOSES.**

7 The purposes of this Act are—

8 (1) to ensure that Pacific salmon trends in  
9 Alaska regarding productivity and abundance are  
10 characterized and that research needs are identified;

11 (2) to prioritize scientific research needs for Pa-  
12 cific salmon in Alaska;

1           (3) to address the increased variability or de-  
2           cline in Pacific salmon returns in Alaska by creating  
3           a coordinated salmon research strategy; and

4           (4) to support collaboration and coordination  
5           for Pacific salmon conservation efforts in Alaska.

6 **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

7           It is the sense of Congress that—

8           (1) salmon are an essential part of Alaska’s  
9           fisheries, including subsistence, commercial, and rec-  
10          reational uses, and there is an urgent need to better  
11          understand the freshwater and marine biology and  
12          ecology of salmon, a migratory species that crosses  
13          many borders, and for a coordinated salmon re-  
14          search strategy to address salmon returns that are  
15          in decline or experiencing increased variability;

16          (2) salmon are an essential element for the  
17          well-being and health of Alaskans; and

18          (3) there is a unique relationship for people of  
19          Indigenous heritage who rely on salmon for subsist-  
20          ence and traditional and cultural practices.

21 **SEC. 4. ALASKA SALMON RESEARCH TASK FORCE.**

22          (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the  
23          date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Commerce,  
24          in consultation with the Governor of Alaska, shall convene

1 an Alaska Salmon Research Task Force (referred to in  
2 this section as the “Research Task Force”) to—

- 3 (1) review existing Pacific salmon research;
- 4 (2) identify applied research needed to better  
5 understand the increased variability and declining  
6 salmon returns in some regions of Alaska; and
- 7 (3) support sustainable management of salmon  
8 in Alaska.

9 (b) COMPOSITION AND APPOINTMENT.—

10 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Research Task Force  
11 shall be composed of not fewer than 13 and not  
12 more than 19 members, who shall be appointed  
13 under paragraphs (2) and (3).

14 (2) APPOINTMENT BY SECRETARY.—The Sec-  
15 retary of Commerce shall appoint members to the  
16 Research Task Force as follows:

17 (A) One representative from each of the  
18 following:

19 (i) The National Oceanic and Atmos-  
20 pheric Administration who is knowledge-  
21 able about salmon and salmon research ef-  
22 forts from the Alaska Region.

23 (ii) The North Pacific Fishery Man-  
24 agement Council.

1 (iii) The United States section of the  
2 Pacific Salmon Commission.

3 (B) Not less than 2 and not more than 5  
4 representatives from each of the following cat-  
5 egories, at least 1 of whom shall represent Alas-  
6 ka Natives who possess personal knowledge of,  
7 and direct experience with, subsistence uses in  
8 rural Alaska, to be appointed with due regard  
9 to differences in regional perspectives and expe-  
10 rience:

11 (i) Residents of Alaska who possess  
12 personal knowledge of, and direct experi-  
13 ence with, subsistence uses in rural Alaska.

14 (ii) Alaska fishing industry represent-  
15 atives throughout the salmon supply chain,  
16 including from—

17 (I) directed commercial fishing;

18 (II) recreational fishing;

19 (III) charter fishing;

20 (IV) seafood processors;

21 (V) salmon prohibited species  
22 catch (bycatch) users; or

23 (VI) hatcheries.

24 (C) 5 representatives who are academic ex-  
25 perts in salmon biology, salmon management,

1 salmon ecology (marine and freshwater), or  
2 comprehensive marine research planning in the  
3 North Pacific.

4 (3) APPOINTMENT BY THE GOVERNOR OF ALAS-  
5 KA.—The Governor of Alaska shall appoint to the  
6 Research Task Force one representative from the  
7 State of Alaska who is knowledgeable about the  
8 State of Alaska’s salmon management and research  
9 efforts.

10 (c) DUTIES.—

11 (1) REVIEW.—The Research Task Force  
12 shall—

13 (A) conduct a review of Pacific salmon  
14 science relevant to understanding and managing  
15 salmon returns in Alaska, including an exam-  
16 ination of—

17 (i) traditional ecological knowledge of  
18 salmon populations and their ecosystems;

19 (ii) marine carrying capacity and den-  
20 sity dependent constraints, including an  
21 examination of interactions with other  
22 salmon species, and with forage base in  
23 marine ecosystems;

24 (iii) life-cycle and stage-specific mor-  
25 tality;

1 (iv) genetic sampling and categoriza-  
2 tion of population structure within salmon  
3 species in Alaska;

4 (v) methods for predicting run-timing  
5 and stock sizes;

6 (vi) oceanographic models that provide  
7 insight into stock distribution, growth, and  
8 survival;

9 (vii) freshwater, estuarine, and marine  
10 processes that affect survival of smolts;

11 (viii) climate effects on freshwater and  
12 marine habitats;

13 (ix) predator/prey interactions be-  
14 tween salmon and marine mammals or  
15 other predators; and

16 (x) salmon productivity trends in  
17 other regions, both domestic and inter-  
18 national, that put Alaska salmon popu-  
19 lations in a broader geographic context;  
20 and

21 (B) identify scientific research gaps in un-  
22 derstanding the Pacific salmon life-cycle in  
23 Alaska.

24 (2) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the  
25 date the Research Task Force is convened, the Re-

1 search Task Force shall submit to the Secretary of  
2 Commerce, the Committee on Commerce, Science,  
3 and Transportation of the Senate, the Committee on  
4 Environment and Public Works of the Senate, the  
5 Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and  
6 Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations  
7 of the Senate, the Committee on Natural Resources  
8 of the House of Representatives, the Subcommittee  
9 on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related  
10 Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations  
11 of the House of Representatives, and the Alaska  
12 State Legislature, and make publicly available, a report—  
13

14 (A) describing the review conducted under  
15 paragraph (1); and

16 (B) that includes—

17 (i) recommendations on filling knowl-  
18 edge gaps that warrant further scientific  
19 inquiry; and

20 (ii) findings from the reports of work  
21 groups submitted under subsection  
22 (d)(2)(C).

23 (d) ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS.—

24 (1) CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON.—

25 The Research Task Force shall select a Chair and

1 Vice Chair by vote from among the members of the  
2 Research Task Force.

3 (2) WORK GROUPS.—

4 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Research Task  
5 Force—

6 (i) not later than 30 days after the  
7 date of the establishment of the Research  
8 Task Force, shall establish a work group  
9 focused specifically on salmon returns in  
10 the AYK (Arctic-Yukon-Kuskoskim) re-  
11 gions of Western Alaska; and

12 (ii) may establish additional regionally  
13 or stock focused work groups within the  
14 Research Task Force, as members deter-  
15 mine appropriate.

16 (B) COMPOSITION.—Each work group es-  
17 tablished under this subsection shall—

18 (i) consist of not less than 5 individ-  
19 uals who—

20 (I) are knowledgeable about the  
21 stock or region under consideration;  
22 and

23 (II) need not be members of the  
24 Research Task Force; and

1 (ii) be balanced in terms of stake-  
2 holder representation, including commer-  
3 cial, recreational, and subsistence fisheries,  
4 as well as experts in statistical, biological,  
5 economic, social, or other scientific infor-  
6 mation as relevant to the work group's  
7 focus.

8 (C) REPORTS.—Not later than 9 months  
9 after the date the Research Task Force is con-  
10 vened, each work group established under this  
11 subsection shall submit a report with the work  
12 group's findings to the Research Task Force.

13 (3) COMPENSATION.—Each member of the Re-  
14 search Task Force shall serve without compensation.

15 (4) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT.—The Secretary  
16 of Commerce shall provide such administrative sup-  
17 port as is necessary for the Research Task Force  
18 and its work groups to carry out their duties, includ-  
19 ing support for virtual or in-person participation and  
20 travel expenses.

21 (e) FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT.—The  
22 Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall not  
23 apply to the Research Task Force.

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