

Union Calendar No.

117TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 6651

[Report No. 117-]

To establish an Alaska Salmon Research Task Force.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 8, 2022

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

APRIL --, 2022

Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union,
and ordered to be printed

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;

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

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

18 **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

19 It is the sense of Congress that—

20 (1) salmon are an essential part of Alaska’s
21 fisheries, including subsistence, commercial, and rec-
22 reational uses, and there is an urgent need to better
23 understand the freshwater and marine biology and
24 ecology of salmon, a migratory species that crosses
25 many borders, and for a coordinated salmon re-

1 search strategy to address salmon returns that are
2 in decline or experiencing increased variability;

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

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

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

9 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the
10 date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Commerce,
11 in consultation with the Governor of Alaska, shall convene
12 an Alaska Salmon Research Task Force (referred to in
13 this section as the “Research Task Force”) to—

14 (1) review existing Pacific salmon research;

15 (2) identify applied research needed to better
16 understand the increased variability and declining
17 salmon returns in some regions of Alaska; and

18 (3) support sustainable management of salmon
19 in Alaska.

20 (b) COMPOSITION AND APPOINTMENT.—

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

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

4 (A) One representative from each of the
5 following:

6 (i) The National Oceanic and Atmos-
7 pheric Administration who is knowledge-
8 able about salmon and salmon research ef-
9 forts from the Alaska Region.

10 (ii) The North Pacific Fishery Man-
11 agement Council.

12 (iii) The United States section of the
13 Pacific Salmon Commission.

14 (B) Not less than 2 and not more than 5
15 representatives from each of the following cat-
16 egories, at least 1 of whom shall represent Alas-
17 ka Natives who possess personal knowledge of,
18 and direct experience with, subsistence uses in
19 rural Alaska, to be appointed with due regard
20 to differences in regional perspectives and expe-
21 rience:

22 (i) Residents of Alaska who possess
23 personal knowledge of, and direct experi-
24 ence with, subsistence uses in rural Alaska.

1 (ii) Alaska fishing industry represent-
2 atives throughout the salmon supply chain,
3 including from—

4 (I) directed commercial fishing;

5 (II) recreational fishing;

6 (III) charter fishing;

7 (IV) seafood processors;

8 (V) salmon prohibited species
9 catch (bycatch) users; or

10 (VI) hatcheries.

11 (C) 5 representatives who are academic ex-
12 perts in salmon biology, salmon management,
13 salmon ecology (marine and freshwater), or
14 comprehensive marine research planning in the
15 North Pacific.

16 (3) APPOINTMENT BY THE GOVERNOR OF ALAS-
17 KA.—The Governor of Alaska shall appoint to the
18 Research Task Force one representative from the
19 State of Alaska who is knowledgeable about the
20 State of Alaska's salmon management and research
21 efforts.

22 (c) DUTIES.—

23 (1) REVIEW.—The Research Task Force
24 shall—

1 (A) conduct a review of Pacific salmon
2 science relevant to understanding and managing
3 salmon returns in Alaska, including an exam-
4 ination of—

5 (i) traditional ecological knowledge of
6 salmon populations and their ecosystems;

7 (ii) marine carrying capacity and den-
8 sity dependent constraints, including an
9 examination of interactions with other
10 salmon species, and with forage base in
11 marine ecosystems;

12 (iii) life-cycle and stage-specific mor-
13 tality;

14 (iv) genetic sampling and categoriza-
15 tion of population structure within salmon
16 species in Alaska;

17 (v) methods for predicting run-timing
18 and stock sizes;

19 (vi) oceanographic models that provide
20 insight into stock distribution, growth, and
21 survival;

22 (vii) freshwater, estuarine, and marine
23 processes that affect survival of smolts;

24 (viii) climate effects on freshwater and
25 marine habitats;

1 (ix) predator/prey interactions be-
2 tween salmon and marine mammals or
3 other predators; and

4 (x) salmon productivity trends in
5 other regions, both domestic and inter-
6 national, that put Alaska salmon popu-
7 lations in a broader geographic context;
8 and

9 (B) identify scientific research gaps in un-
10 derstanding the Pacific salmon life-cycle in
11 Alaska.

12 (2) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the
13 date the Research Task Force is convened, the Re-
14 search Task Force shall submit to the Secretary of
15 Commerce, the Committee on Commerce, Science,
16 and Transportation of the Senate, the Committee on
17 Environment and Public Works of the Senate, the
18 Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and
19 Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropria-
20 tions of the Senate, the Committee on Natural Re-
21 sources of the House of Representatives, the Sub-
22 committee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Re-
23 lated Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations
24 of the House of Representatives, and the Alaska

1 State Legislature, and make publicly available, a re-
2 port—

3 (A) describing the review conducted under
4 paragraph (1); and

5 (B) that includes—

6 (i) recommendations on filling knowl-
7 edge gaps that warrant further scientific
8 inquiry; and

9 (ii) findings from the reports of work
10 groups submitted under subsection
11 (d)(2)(C).

12 (d) ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS.—

13 (1) CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON.—

14 The Research Task Force shall select a Chair and
15 Vice Chair by vote from among the members of the
16 Research Task Force.

17 (2) WORK GROUPS.—

18 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Research Task
19 Force—

20 (i) not later than 30 days after the
21 date of the establishment of the Research
22 Task Force, shall establish a work group
23 focused specifically on salmon returns in
24 the AYK (Arctic-Yukon-Kuskoskim) re-
25 gions of Western Alaska; and

1 (ii) may establish additional regionally
2 or stock focused work groups within the
3 Research Task Force, as members deter-
4 mine appropriate.

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

7 (i) consist of not less than 5 individ-
8 uals who—

9 (I) are knowledgeable about the
10 stock or region under consideration;
11 and

12 (II) need not be members of the
13 Research Task Force; and

14 (ii) be balanced in terms of stake-
15 holder representation, including commer-
16 cial, recreational, and subsistence fisheries,
17 as well as experts in statistical, biological,
18 economic, social, or other scientific infor-
19 mation as relevant to the work group's
20 focus.

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

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

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

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