



State of Washington  
**DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE**

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 43200, Olympia, WA 98504-3200 • (360) 902-2200 • TDD (360) 902-2207  
Main Office Location: Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street SE, Olympia, WA

April 7, 2023

Senator Mark Mullet, Vice Chair  
Senator Mark Schoesler, Ranking Member  
Ways and Means Committee  
Washington State Senate  
311 John A. Cherberg Building  
Post Office Box 40482  
Olympia, WA 98504-0482

Representative Steve Tharinger, Chair  
Representative Mike Steele, Ranking Member  
Capital Budget Committee  
Washington State House of Representatives  
222A John L O'Brien Building  
Post Office Box 40600  
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

**RE: 2023 Session Capital Conference Budget**

Dear Senators Mullet and Schoesler; Representatives Tharinger and Steele:

Thank you for the support you have shown to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) in the capital budgets that were passed out of each chamber. As you head into Conference Committee, I wanted to provide you with our recommendations and suggestions for your final negotiations.

I am grateful for the increased investments made in both the Senate and House capital budgets for Department projects. Please see our enclosures for suggested changes, including our rationale. Also, don't hesitate to contact me or Tom McBride, Legislative Director, at (360) 480-1472 if you have any questions as you continue to finalize the capital budget.

Thanks again for all you do to support the Department's ability to conserve and manage the fish, wildlife, and ecosystems that make Washington such a great state.

Sincerely,

Kelly Susewind  
Director

## **WDFW Suggested Edits and Rationale Capital Budget**

### **Minor Works Preservation**

**Background:** Minor works preservation projects are the critical to meet the agency mission. Key components include capital upgrades and repairs to out hatcheries, boating access, and the facilities our staff work and live in. The agency prioritized projects such as non-hatchery infrastructure repairs that would allow for much needed improvements to wildlife area headquarters, equipment storage, and residences in remote areas.

**Recommendation:** Align with Senate.

**Rationale:** A reduction in much needed improvements will increase the backlog of projects, place excessive pressure on maintenance dollars for maintenance and repair on projects that should be full replacements and make some of our infrastructure non-functioning. Funding the design components for the Biosecurity facility, Pre-Design for the Samish Hatchery intake, will allow for a more even workflow in future biennia.

### **Minor Works Programmatic**

**Background:** Minor works programmatic projects are critical to meet the agency mission. Key components include new infrastructure for our agency to meet the growing public demand for recreational fishing, hunting, and access to the outdoors.

**Recommendation:** Align with House.

**Rationale:** With a demonstrated support for increasing enforcement, the need for a Region 3 enforcement storage is critical to not only store equipment and vehicles, but to have a centralized location for a visible presence in the community. This option best follows the agency priorities.

### **Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program \$15.8M in the Senate and \$20M in the House**

**Background:** Our local partners and sponsors value the integrated program approach ESRP takes administering Shore Friendly, Restoration and Protection projects, Pre-Design projects, and Small Grants.

**Recommendation:** Align with House. With a \$20 million appropriation, to fully support administering our ESRP sub-programs, we would require the same 10% total admin rate as has been historically applied to the program-split across both RCO and WDFW.

**Rationale:** WDFW prefers the funding level in the House budget because it better reflects the level of WDFW staff that's necessary to both assist grantees and hold them accountable to delivering the results the Legislature and the public expect

## **WWRP \$120M in the Senate and \$100M in the House**

**Background:** Washington Wildlife Recreation grants administered through RCO are a vital component for WDFW to improve recreational access and wildlife habitat improvement through land acquisition and public access improvements.

**Recommendation:** Align with Senate.

**Rationale:** WDFW goes through a rigorous prioritization process for all of the RCO grant applications to ensure projects are viable and ready to progress. Funding at the higher level will increase the amount of opportunity the State will have to make time limited land purchases and access improvements while the opportunities exist.