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May 8, 2019

To the Honorable Speaker and Members,  
The House of Representatives of the State of Washington

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning herewith, without my approval as to Sections 13 and 8(1)(a), Second Substitute House Bill No. 1579 entitled:

“AN ACT Relating to implementing recommendations of the southern resident killer whale task force related to increasing chinook abundance.”

This bill implements recommendations of the Southern Resident orca task force (task force) related to increasing chinook abundance.

Current laws and protections are not sufficient. Salmon populations continue to decline putting our beloved orca at risk.

This bill provides the long needed tools to protect salmon habitat when development permits are issued along our marine and freshwater shoreline. Strengthening the hydraulic code will help ensure development projects that affect salmon and their habitats do no harm.

However, I am vetoing Section 13, which would require certain state agencies and local governments to identify river management demonstration projects in Whatcom, Snohomish, and Grays Harbor counties, because it is not a recommendation of the task force. As such, it is outside of both the title and scope of the bill, in violation of Article 2, Sections 19 and 38 of our constitution. Section 13 is unrelated, unnecessary and an unfortunate addition to this important bill about salmon and orca habitat and recovery.

In addition, I am also vetoing Section 8(1)(a), which establishes maximum civil penalty amounts for violations of Chapter 77.55 RCW (Construction Projects in State Waters). Consistent with the task force's recommendations, the original bill established a maximum civil penalty of up to ten thousand dollars for each violation. When the Legislature amended the bill to add Section 13, it simultaneously amended Section 8 and tied the original civil penalty amount to passage of Section 13. It did so by reducing the maximum civil penalty to "up to one hundred dollars" if Section 13 is not enacted by June 30, 2019. By making the original civil penalty amount contingent on passage of an unconstitutional section of the bill, the Legislature further compounded the constitutional violation. In addition, by structuring the contingency language within a subsection of Section 8, the Legislature intentionally attempted to circumvent and impede my veto authority by entangling an unrelated and unconstitutional provision within a recommendation of the task force. In vetoing this subsection, I direct the department to continue to use its authority to secure the effect of the statute, to establish a maximum civil penalty not to exceed the penalty amount established in the original

bill, and to use its rulemaking authority to support these efforts as needed.

I understand the concerns of landowners who are living and working in floodplains and the need for better approaches to protecting their property. We also need to find balance to provide habitat for salmon to spawn and grow if we want to save our orcas. We already have important programs in place to address ecosystem based river management. Watershed solutions should come from local efforts and I encourage people living in these communities to work collaboratively, with their neighbors, local governments, salmon recovery and agricultural preservation organizations to fund effective local solutions.

For these reasons I have vetoed Sections 13 and 8(1)(a) of Second Substitute House Bill No. 1579.

With the exception of Sections 13 and 8(1)(a), Second Substitute House Bill No. 1579 is approved.

Respectfully submitted,



Jay Inslee  
Governor