

Sponsor Statement

Senate Bill 70

“An Act relating to the emergency order authority of the commissioner of fish and game and to meetings of the Board of Fisheries.”

When the Legislature created the Board of Fisheries, it delegated to it specific rule-making powers. The Legislature protected the limits of these powers by vesting the Department of Fish and Game with statutes that guaranteed decision-making based upon sustained yield and conservation. The Legislature provided all the checks and balances through statute to facilitate a responsible public process and protection of the fishery resources.

Through statutes and appropriations, the Legislature enables the Department of Fish and Game to develop the science necessary for identification of conservation issues and to ensure sustainable fisheries. The Board of Fisheries is comprised of lay members whose primary duty is to allocate fishery resources among beneficial users. The Board of Fisheries meets for approximately 45 days annually on a rotational three-year cycle by area. Because of this, the Department of Fish and Game is better able to determine critical fishery decisions on a day-to-day basis.

[Senate Bill 70](#) clarifies two of the areas the Legislature has defined for the Board of Fisheries. The first is a management tool that provides the flexibility necessary for issuing emergency orders to open or extend a fishing season in times of surpluses. This tool does not summarily change adopted management plans or allocations determined by the Board of Fisheries.

The second change places the board’s own regulatory language for agenda procedures into statute. Additionally, it adds a requirement that the Department of Fish and Game must concur with the Board of Fisheries that a conservation emergency exists and cannot be resolved under a current regulation for the purposes of addressing a proposal out-of-cycle.

Providing the public with an amenable process is what the Legislature intended when it created the Board’s governing statutes. I respectfully request the support of my colleagues in clarifying this vital public process as outlined in Senate Bill 70.