

Individual State Agency Fiscal Note

Bill Number: 5846 S SB	Title: Beaver ecosystem management	Agency: 477-Department of Fish and Wildlife
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Part I: Estimates

No Fiscal Impact

Estimated Cash Receipts to:

NONE

Estimated Operating Expenditures from:

	FY 2024	FY 2025	2023-25	2025-27	2027-29
FTE Staff Years	0.0	1.6	0.8	1.6	1.6
Account					
General Fund-State 001-1	0	1,201,000	1,201,000	2,242,000	2,214,000
Total \$	0	1,201,000	1,201,000	2,242,000	2,214,000

Estimated Capital Budget Impact:

NONE

The cash receipts and expenditure estimates on this page represent the most likely fiscal impact. Factors impacting the precision of these estimates, and alternate ranges (if appropriate), are explained in Part II.

Check applicable boxes and follow corresponding instructions:

- If fiscal impact is greater than \$50,000 per fiscal year in the current biennium or in subsequent biennia, complete entire fiscal note form Parts I-V.
- If fiscal impact is less than \$50,000 per fiscal year in the current biennium or in subsequent biennia, complete this page only (Part I).
- Capital budget impact, complete Part IV.
- Requires new rule making, complete Part V.

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Part II: Narrative Explanation

II. A - Brief Description Of What The Measure Does That Has Fiscal Impact

Significant provisions of the bill and any related workload or policy assumptions that have revenue or expenditure impact on the responding agency by section number.

Differences between SSB 5846 and SB 5846

Section 2(1) clarifies a potential WAC revision; therefore, rulemaking costs were reduced.

Section 2(1)(b) adds language stating conflict management at compensatory mitigation sites must consider the goals and objectives of the site as defined by WAC-220-660-030. Revised bill language does not impact costs from the original fiscal note.

Section 2(1)(c) adds direction to WDFW to provide available tools and options to mitigate or reduce conflict. This change does not impact costs from the original fiscal note.

Section 2(1)(7) addressing monitoring beaver populations and take was eliminated, so associated costs were removed.

Section 2(2) was added to clarify nothing in Section 2 prevents any landowner from taking immediate action within the scope of existing law necessary to protect life, property, and built infrastructure including, but not limited to, homes, roads, culverts, and bridges.

New Description:

Section 2 adds new sections to chapter 77.12 RCW directing the agency to create and implement a statewide beaver ecosystem management plan.

Section 2(1) requires that the plan must fulfill the mandate identified in RCW 77.04.012 by including recommendations and guidelines to protect and reduce mortality for beavers in areas with newly relocated or recovering populations, as well as locations being actively managed to establish a sustainable beaver population in order to provide an ecosystem benefit from the presence of beavers .

Section 2(2) requires the agency to manage beaver conflicts and mitigate property damage caused by beavers.

Section 2(3) requires the agency to provide public education and outreach to landowners and community members regarding the benefits of beaver habitat.

Section 2(4) requires the agency to provide technical and financial assistance for protecting beaver habitat in situ or participation in a beaver relocation project.

Section 2(5) requires the agency to identify locations where the reintroduction or protection of beaver provides benefits to salmon habitats.

Section 2(6) restricts recreational harvest at release sites and monitoring beaver survival and establishment at release sites.

Section 2(8) requires building partnerships with land managers, local governments, tribes, the scientific community, recreational beaver trappers, riverscape restoration practitioners, and other stakeholders.

Section 2(9) requires involvement of volunteer and nonprofit organizations in beaver education and outreach programs.

Section 3(1) requires the agency to establish a grant program to provide beaver education and outreach, technical

assistance, and resources to assist landowners in living with beavers on their property, and support for beaver relocation programs. The agency shall establish grant criteria, including eligibility and cost-share requirements, for participating in the program.

II. B - Cash receipts Impact

Cash receipts impact of the legislation on the responding agency with the cash receipts provisions identified by section number and when appropriate, the detail of the revenue sources. Description of the factual basis of the assumptions and the method by which the cash receipts impact is derived. Explanation of how workload assumptions translate into estimates. Distinguished between one time and ongoing functions.

II. C - Expenditures

Agency expenditures necessary to implement this legislation (or savings resulting from this legislation), with the provisions of the legislation that result in the expenditures (or savings) identified by section number. Description of the factual basis of the assumptions and the method by which the expenditure impact is derived. Explanation of how workload assumptions translate into cost estimates. Distinguished between one time and ongoing functions.

Section 2 requires the implementation and creation of a statewide beaver ecosystem management plan.

1.0 FTE Environmental Planner 4 (EP4) is required in fiscal year 2025 and ongoing to implement the beaver management program, provide coordination within WDFW and with outside stakeholders, and administer the grant.

The responsibilities of this EP4 include (Section 2 which is added under this bill to RCW 77.12) creating a statewide beaver management plan beginning with securing and then overseeing a consultant who will write the plan. The plan described in Section 2 needs to be comprehensive and include all items identified in Section 2(1)(a-h). The EP4 will facilitate the process and access to the internal and external partners, stakeholders, programs, and people necessary for the writing of the plan.

The second primary responsibility of the EP4 pursuant to Section 3(1) is to establish and administer a grant program to provide (a) beaver education and outreach; (b) technical assistance and resources to landowners co-existing with beaver; and (c) support beaver relocation pursuant to the comprehensive plan (from Sec. 2) and consistent with RCW 77.32.585.

Under Section 3(1) the EP4 will coordinate the process and decision making necessary to establish grant criteria including participation eligibility and cost-share requirements. Lastly, the EP4 will serve on an ongoing to coordinate the cross program (WDFW Habitat and Wildlife Programs) communication and coordination necessary to implement the comprehensive beaver management plan (Sec 2).

Salaries and benefits are \$129,000 in fiscal year 2025 and ongoing.

Contracts, Object C, include \$200,000 in fiscal year 2025 for a contractor to develop a comprehensive ecosystem management plan and guidelines and GIS tool development.

Pass-through, Object N, includes \$30,000 in fiscal year 2025 and ongoing to provide grants for beaver education and outreach efforts, and \$400,000 in fiscal year 2025 for projects focused on implementing the beaver ecosystem management plan for habitat restoration, increasing to \$600,000 in fiscal year 2026 and ongoing for habitat restoration projects (\$200,000 per on-ground habitat work in advance of beaver introduction).

An additional \$3,000 per beaver relocation and \$2,000 for continued monitoring times up to 30 relocations per year totals \$150,000 in fiscal year 2025 and ongoing. Support for outreach and education at \$2,000 per relocater for 16 relocaters is estimated at \$32,000 in fiscal year 2025 and ongoing.

Total Pass-through, Object N, is \$612,000 in fiscal year 2025 and \$812,000 in fiscal year 2026 and ongoing.

Section 2(1)(f) requires rulemaking addressing restrictions to recreation harvest at release sites. Involving WAC 220-417-010, with potential for up to 4 additional WACs. Rule adoption includes \$1,500 per rule x 5 rules, and AG assistance \$2,500 per rule x 5 rules. Total rulemaking is \$20,000 in fiscal year 2026.

Section 2(1)(f) also requires 0.6 FTE Scientific Technician 1 in fiscal year 2025 and ongoing to monitor beaver survival and establishment at release sites.

While there are beaver relocators already working in the state to monitor beaver relocations, the bill requests WDFW to more directly follow the establishment and survival of beavers post-relocation. Currently, relocators are required to visually check their relocated beavers three times after relocation – once within a few weeks of the relocation, once again the following season, and again the following spring. However, these visual checks do not necessarily determine beaver long-term establishment or survival post-relocation. VHF tracking, which can include visual observation, of individually released beavers would provide the establishment and survival information that is currently requested of this bill.

Salaries and benefits total \$40,000 in fiscal year 2025 and ongoing.

Travel, Object G, includes per diem at \$74 per day x 155 days in fiscal year 2025 and ongoing. Lodging includes \$158 x 116 nights in FY 2025 and ongoing. Motor pool costs include 4x4 truck lease at \$40/day and 0.32 per mile, assuming 3,000 miles per year. Travel costs total \$37,000 in fiscal year 2025 and ongoing.

Equipment, Object J, includes a BT-7 (MS6) VHF Beaver Tail Transmitters for tracking survival and establishment of beavers at relocation sites (\$240 x 50 units) in fiscal year 2025.

TR8 and antennas for tracking survival and establishment of beavers at relocation sites (2 TR8s at \$1,140 each, plus 2 antennas at \$330 each) in fiscal year 2025.

GPS for navigating in remote areas (\$400 x 1 unit), iPad for data entry (\$250 x 1 unit), inReach for safety in remote areas (\$300 x 1 unit) in FY 2025 and inReach service at \$180 in fiscal year 2025 and ongoing.

Total equipment costs are \$16,000 in FY 2025, and \$180 in fiscal year 2026 and ongoing.

Goods and Services, Object E, also includes \$7,000 per FTE, per year, for WDFW standard costs, which cover an average employee's supplies, communications, training, and subscription costs per year.

An infrastructure and program support rate of 36.03% is included in object T and is calculated based on WDFW's federally approved indirect rate.

Part III: Expenditure Detail

III. A - Operating Budget Expenditures

Account	Account Title	Type	FY 2024	FY 2025	2023-25	2025-27	2027-29
001-1	General Fund	State	0	1,201,000	1,201,000	2,242,000	2,214,000
Total \$			0	1,201,000	1,201,000	2,242,000	2,214,000

III. B - Expenditures by Object Or Purpose

	FY 2024	FY 2025	2023-25	2025-27	2027-29
FTE Staff Years		1.6	0.8	1.6	1.6
A-Salaries and Wages		122,000	122,000	244,000	244,000
B-Employee Benefits		47,000	47,000	94,000	94,000
C-Professional Service Contracts		200,000	200,000		
E-Goods and Other Services		11,000	11,000	42,000	22,000
G-Travel		37,000	37,000	74,000	74,000
J-Capital Outlays		16,000	16,000		
M-Inter Agency/Fund Transfers					
N-Grants, Benefits & Client Services		612,000	612,000	1,624,000	1,624,000
P-Debt Service					
S-Interagency Reimbursements					
T-Intra-Agency Reimbursements		156,000	156,000	164,000	156,000
9-					
Total \$	0	1,201,000	1,201,000	2,242,000	2,214,000

III. C - Operating FTE Detail: *List FTEs by classification and corresponding annual compensation. Totals need to agree with total FTEs in Part I and Part IIIA*

Job Classification	Salary	FY 2024	FY 2025	2023-25	2025-27	2027-29
Environmental Planner 4	92,868		1.0	0.5	1.0	1.0
Scientific Technician 1	41,448		0.6	0.3	0.6	0.6
Total FTEs			1.6	0.8	1.6	1.6

III. D - Expenditures By Program (optional)

NONE

Part IV: Capital Budget Impact

IV. A - Capital Budget Expenditures

NONE

IV. B - Expenditures by Object Or Purpose

NONE

IV. C - Capital Budget Breakout

Acquisition and construction costs not reflected elsewhere on the fiscal note and description of potential financing methods.

NONE

IV. D - Capital FTE Detail: *FTEs listed by classification and corresponding annual compensation. Totals agree with total FTEs in Part IVB.*

NONE

Part V: New Rule Making Required

Provisions of the bill that require the agency to adopt new administrative rules or repeal/revise existing rules.

WAC 220-417-010 (1) – Add restrictions to enact closures in areas where beavers have been recently relocated.

WDFW anticipates additional WACs requiring revisions will be identified during the planning phase. Five WAC revisions are estimated in total.