

SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Department of Fish and Wildlife Fish Hatcheries

To: Ways and Means Full Committee
From: Natural Resources Subcommittee
Carrier: Senator Anderson

On Wednesday, February 9th, the Natural Resources Subcommittee recommended acknowledging receipt of a report from the Department of Fish and Wildlife on fish hatcheries.

The Department's budget bill, HB 5009, included a budget note directing the Department to provide a report on due diligence prior to taking ownership of Leaburg Hatchery; analysis around the rebuilding of Rock Creek Hatchery; and an analysis of statewide hatchery needs and best practices.

Due to the closure of the McKenzie Hatchery, the Department has had to shift production to Leaburg Hatchery, which is being operated under a no-cost lease agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Due to the production shift and the associated contract timeline, the potential ownership transfer is not expected to take place until 2025 at the earliest.

The Department is still pursuing insurance claims related to the Rock Creek Hatchery, which was nearly destroyed by the Archie Creek Fire in 2020. While the Department continues to negotiate with insurance and FEMA, it is contracting for a climate vulnerability assessment for Rock Creek and five other hatcheries around the state. Once that assessment is received, it will help inform the Department about options regarding Rock Creek Hatchery.

While the Department was not able to complete an analysis of statewide hatchery needs given the timeframe and resources available, the Department will provide updates to the Legislature on any developments around Leaburg, McKenzie, and Rock Creek Hatcheries, and the conclusions of the climate vulnerability assessment during the 2023 legislative session.

The Natural Resources Subcommittee recommends approval.