

Joint Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture

The Joint Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture studies California policy issues and problems related to Fisheries and Aquaculture in order to develop longer range solutions. It has membership from both houses and considers issues of joint concern. It may hold hearings or educational forums related to fisheries and aquaculture. It also works with other standing committees (e.g. Water, Parks and Wildlife, Natural Resources, budget, etc.) and multi-state committees (e.g. Pacific Fisheries Legislative Task Force) to provide information on relevant fisheries and aquaculture issues. The Committee provides a direct link between the fishing and aquaculture industry and the legislature.

Assemblyman Barry Keene convened first Legislative Fisheries Forum in 1973 to provide fishermen and others the opportunity to air their concerns, propose actions to protect and improve freshwater and marine fish resources and fisheries. At Assemblyman Keene's request the Joint Rules Committee created the Joint Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture pursuant to Resolution Chapter 88 of the Statutes of 1981. The Fisheries Forum has become an annual Capitol event followed each year by a seafood reception provided and prepared by fishermen and their families. This reception has become one of the most popular yearly legislative receptions.

The Committee consists of four members of the Senate and four members of the Assembly selected in the manner provided for in the Joint Rules of the Senate and Assembly. Vacancies occurring between general sessions of the Legislature are filled in a manner provided for in the Joint Rules of the Senate and Assembly.

The Committee meets upon call of the Chair. Notice of hearings and the subject matter being heard are given in the Daily File. The Chair shall set the hearings, arrange the calendar and develop the agenda for Committee hearings. The Chair of the Joint Committee rotates from the Assembly to the Senate. Past and current Committee Chairs include: Senator Barry Keene (1973-1986), Assemblymember Dan Hauser (1986-1996), Senator Mike Thompson (1996-1999), Assemblymember Virginia Strom-Martin (1999-2003), Senator Dede Alpert (2003), Assemblymember Patty Berg (2004-2008), Senator Pat Wiggins (2008-2009), Assemblymember Wesley Chesbro (2010-2014) and Senator Mike McGuire (2015-present).

The Joint Committee has statutory relationships with the Aquaculture Development Committee, the California Advisory Committee on Salmon and Steelhead Trout, the Dungeness Crab Task Force, the Steelhead Card, and the Ocean Science Trust. It also has some oversight over the Nearshore Fisheries Management Act, the Marine Life Protection Act and the Marine Life Management Act. The Department of Fish and Wildlife is required by statute to consult with the Joint Committee on specific issues.