Substantial development permit—Exemption for projects to improve fish or wildlife habitat or fish passage. (1) A public or private project that is designed to improve fish or wildlife habitat or fish passage shall be exempt from the substantial development permit requirements of this chapter when all of the following apply:

(a) The project has been approved by the department of fish and wildlife or, for forest practices hydraulic projects within the scope of RCW 77.55.181, the department of natural resources if the local government notification provisions of RCW 77.55.181 are satisfied;

(b) The project has received hydraulic project approval by the department of fish and wildlife pursuant to chapter 77.55 RCW or approval of a forest practices hydraulic project within the scope of RCW 77.55.181 from the department of natural resources if the local government notification provisions of RCW 77.55.181 are satisfied; and

(c) The local government has determined that the project is substantially consistent with the local shoreline master program. The local government shall make such determination in a timely manner and provide it by letter to the project proponent.

(2) Fish habitat enhancement projects that conform to the provisions of RCW 77.55.181 are determined to be consistent with local shoreline master programs.

(3) Public projects for the primary purpose of fish passage improvement or fish passage barrier removal are exempt from the substantial development permit requirements of this chapter. [2021 c 289 § 2; 2019 c 150 § 2; 2003 c 39 § 49; 1998 c 249 § 4; 1995 c 333 § 1.]