

American Fisheries Society Oregon Chapter

OR Chapter AFS: PO Box 8062 Portland, OR 97207-8062

www.orafs.org



April 24, 2015

Dear Honorable Legislator,

The Oregon Chapter of the American Fisheries Society (ORAFS) is comprised of over 500 fisheries and aquatic science professionals from federal, state, and tribal agencies, colleges and universities, diverse private employers, students, and retirees. The Chapter was established in 1964 as part of the American Fisheries Society. Our mission is to improve the conservation and sustainability of Oregon fishery resources and their aquatic ecosystems for long-term public benefit by advancing science, education and public discourse concerning fisheries and aquatic science and by promoting the development of fisheries professionals.

The ODFW budget has long been supported primarily by hunting and fishing license fees. To that end, a modest increase in fees, coupled with general fund dollars, and agency streamlining will help to ensure that the services and opportunities provided to the citizens of Oregon continues into the future. Oregon's economy directly benefits because of the hunting and fishing resources ODFW manages, resulting in several billions of dollars of recreation and tourism revenue. Additionally, the agency's responsibility for fish and wildlife management continues to increase, not only for those resources that are hunted or fished for, but for the whole spectrum of Oregon's species. The rich biodiversity found in this state needs to be managed and preserved to maintain the natural systems that benefit all Oregonians.

Due to potential fiscal shortfalls, many employees and programs at ODFW are at risk of being lost. Some of these programs plan, implement, and coordinate restoration projects, conservation, and research that are congruent with our organization's mission. Many of our ORAFS members that work for ODFW have led the charge on beneficial conservation related work; such as research and monitoring that led to the delisting of Oregon Chub, the first fish species to be removed from the federal endangered species list. Current work towards such as the review and update of the nationally renowned Oregon Conservation Strategy and programs such as the Western Oregon Stream Restoration Program are essential to the long-term persistence of Oregon's natural resources.

We strongly support passage of SB5511 to ensure that ODFW's budget is fully funded, and that the Department will have the ability to manage and conserve Oregon's fish and wildlife resources into the future. We hope that the information provided by the ORAFS will help to inform your decisions as you consider ODFW budget-related legislation this session.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Sincerely,

Michael Gauvin- President, American Fisheries Society- Oregon Chapter

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