

Chair and Committee Members,

I have long been a strong advocate for ODFW, and not someone reflexively opposed to fee increases.

That said, I urge you to reject the current proposal from ODFW to dramatically increase existing fees and add new ones. For example, the proposed new "saltwater license" provides zero benefit to ocean anglers and merely adds to the ODFW's already overly complex schedule of licenses and fees. This new license adds yet another barrier to families that simply want to enjoy a day at the beach and cast a line into the surf.

ODFW acknowledges these increases will reduce sales of angling licenses by at least 10,000 annually. That is not a strategy for sustaining the department. The department needs to increase opportunity and sell MORE licenses, not fewer.

I encourage the Legislature to use this opportunity to put ODFW on a path of financial sustainability. Reject the proposed fee increases and direct the agency to come back with a plan to sell more licenses rather than this simplistic but self defeating budget proposal of steadily increasing fees for a shrinking pool of participants.

Very truly,

Gary Kish, Columbia County