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Senator Richard Devlin  
Representative Dan Rayfield  
Co-Chairs  
Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources

Re: Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife Budget Proposal

Dear Sirs,

I am writing you today to offer my support for ODF&W's budget proposal and fee restructure. I am a lifelong hunter and fisherman, father of two and businessman. I am a business consultant and am on the Board of Directors of Leupold & Stevens, a 5<sup>th</sup> generation Oregon-based family-owned hunting and sports optics company.

I have reviewed the budget proposal summary and I support the thoughtful and business-minded approach the agency has taken to address its' budget challenges. I appreciate the steps taken to aggressively lower operating costs by eliminating or reducing programs and unnecessary expenses. As a former CEO and businessman, I understand both the critical importance of eliminating non-value added costs and activities as well as the difficulty of making these decisions. I like the fact that the agency started by assessing and cutting expenses first, but I also support their case for shifting \$9.6 million off license fees to the General Fund. The agency's work around fish and wildlife and law enforcement benefits all Oregonians, not just hunters and anglers.

Nobody likes a price increase. However, all businesses and organizations experience increases in operating expenses such as healthcare, fuel, insurance and facilities costs that must be offset by passing these increases on to the customer from time to time. The incremental approach that the agency has taken to increase license fees over time is both rational and palatable to me as a consumer.

I also appreciate the steps taken to reduce the costs of youth licenses. The \$10 youth combination license available to kids 17 and under reduces the barrier to many families wanting to introduce their children to hunting and fishing. This approach makes it clear that building the next generation of sportsman and women is a high priority for the agency which is critical to maintain a strong base of hunters and anglers. I also support the direction taken with the Pioneer license. As our current hunting and fishing participants in the Baby Boomer generation age (and I am a member of this group) it only makes sense that we continue to financially support the agency's programs and activities by paying our fair share. The balanced approach makes sense and I have no problem with this.

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I would also like to emphasize my support for the agency's Mentored Youth program. Both of my children and many of their friends have been successfully introduced to hunting beginning at age 9 through this progressive program. My friends and family have also taken advantage of the many youth hunting opportunities such as the youth pheasant hunt on Sauvies Island, youth waterfowl weekend and youth Spring turkey hunt. All of these programs help get kids involved in hunting at an earlier age and foster spending quality time outdoors with family. They also play a critical role in passing on hunting and fishing traditions and expanding ODF&W's consumer base over the longer term.

Lastly, I would like to emphasize the importance of ODF&W adopting an ongoing focus on driving efficiency improvements to minimize waste and maximize the return on our investment. Again, as a businessman, I believe it is incumbent on all leaders to be accountable for managing their operations as efficiently as possible.

I sincerely appreciate your consideration of my comments and for your ongoing work on behalf of all Oregonians.

Respectfully,

Jim Clark