



February 21, 2019

Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources
Co-Chairs Rep. Reardon and Sen. Taylor
Senator Frederick
Senator Girod
Representative Hayden
Representative Holvey
Representative Neron
Representative Brock Smith

Re: Trout Unlimited Comments on HB 5017 (Department of Environmental Quality Budget)

Dear Co-Chairs Rep. Reardon and Sen. Taylor and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on House Bill (HB 5017). My name is Chandra Ferrari and I represent Trout Unlimited, a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of cold-water fishes, such as trout and salmon, and their habitats. Trout Unlimited has more than 300,000 members and supporters nationwide including over 3,000 in Oregon.

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) plays a fundamental role in ensuring that Oregon's surface and groundwater are of sufficient quality to be used by humans for drinking, recreation and other beneficial uses and to protect aquatic ecosystems. TU supports many of the recommendations in the Governor's Recommended Budget (GRB) however we are concerned that some critical DEQ programs did not receive any funding in the GRB. TU's specific recommendations are below.

Developing Clean Water Plans and Improving Water Quality Outcomes

To ensure the quality of Oregon's water for multiple beneficial uses such as drinking water, fish and wildlife and recreation, DEQ needs sufficient resources to allow it to implement a number of connected actions. For instance, DEQ must develop and implement water quality standards and clean water plans (both are necessary to understand the standards that programs are aiming to achieve and the level of impairment that each waterbody can sustain from various sources to still meet those standards). With standards in place, efforts must be taken to ensure all the pollution sources are not exceeding those standards. This is done through permits to specific dischargers such as NPDES permits and by trying to address Oregon's nonpoint sources of pollution. The GRB does include a large investment (Pkg. 127) to reduce the backlog for pollution permits (such as NPDES permits), but it includes no new resources to develop Clean Water Plans or to engage in or support processes intended to control non-point sources. DEQ generally provides technical assistance to these processes.

TU supports the Governor's recommended investments in this area, but we recommend that you consider reallocating those overall resources to include funding for Clean Water Plans (Pkg 129) and Water Quality Outcomes (Pkg 128). These plans are critical not only to developing and issuing permits, but also to understanding and addressing landscape-level nonpoint sources. With sufficient resources, DEQ can help prioritize and guide watershed restoration efforts to ensure that the substantial investments the state and many other partners are making in water quality, particularly on agricultural lands, will maximize environmental benefits.

Recommendation: \$4,577,292 in Governor's Budget. TU suggests reallocation of 1/3rd each to Packages 127, 128 and 129.

Klamath Basin Water Quality Improvements

The GRB included Package 126 which dedicates 640,412 to DEQ to help address particularly complex water quality challenges occurring in the Klamath basin. These challenges threaten to complicate many of the gains expected to be realized by the Klamath comprehensive settlement agreements. Given the high stakes, these challenges require dedicated resources so that meaningful long-term solutions can be identified and implemented including restoration of the basin's wetlands and removal of the Klamath's lower four dams. Package 126 supports DEQ information-gathering, outreach efforts and effectiveness monitoring to help ensure successful reintroduction of salmon and steelhead into the Klamath Basin. TU supports this package.

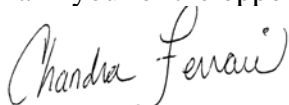
Recommendation: Include allocation of 640,412 for Package 126.

The Governor's Water Vision:

One of Governor Brown's priority initiatives is seeking a secure and resilient water future for all Oregonians. One of the first steps to furthering this effort is the acquisition of critical information that will help Oregon determine how best to strategically invest in built and natural infrastructure. The GRB includes Package 161 which dedicates 250,000 in general fund toward working with agency partners and stakeholders to inventory the long-term needs for water infrastructure. TU supports this package.

Recommendation: Include allocation of 250,000 for Package 161.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



Chandra Ferrari
Senior Policy Advisor
cferrari@tu.org
(916) 214-973