



**To the House Natural Resources Committee
HB 2829 – Establishing the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund**

**David Moskowitz, Executive Director
March 27, 2019**

Dear Honorable Chair Brad Witt and members of the Committee:

The Conservation Angler supports HB 2829 which establishes the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund.

We observed the work of the HB 2402 Task Force established by the 2015 Legislature. TCA has been supportive of creating a funding mechanism that would allow the non-fishing and non-hunting license holders to support the overall and predominant mission of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW). The Fish and Wildlife Commission's preeminent duty is to prevent the serious depletion of native wildlife species for present and future generations.

However, ODFW's ability to meet this mission suffers from four points of conflicting pressure.

1. ODFW faces an unrelenting demand to spend more and more of its overall budget to provide fishing and hunting opportunity for fewer and fewer people; and
2. ODFW does not have a mechanism to raise funds to manage and conserve all of Oregon's wildlife – particularly our non-game wildlife species; and
3. ODFW's hunting, fishing and shellfish license buyers do not generally want their license funds used to manage and conserve non-game wildlife species; and finally
4. ODFW has an \$80 million+ deferred maintenance deficit in its existing hatchery and wildlife area facility budget which threatens to engulf its cash reserves.

The Conservation Angler supports HB 2829. However, it is critical that the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund not be source of funding for any fish hatchery programs.

HB 2829 is just one of the many ideas that arose from the HB 2402 Task Force. TCA believes that HB 2829 can and will play an important role in protecting wildlife and promoting outdoor recreation across Oregon.

The key performance elements that HB 2829 must provide are:

1. New funding for ODFW's Conservation Programs that are chronically underfunded; and
2. Providing a vehicle for Oregon's non-hunting and fishing citizens to contribute to ODFW's Conservation and non-hunting and fishing outdoor recreation experience.

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