



**Christopher Paasch, Curry County Commissioner-- Chair**

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Subject: Letter to Oregon State Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources in reference to **HB2379-1**

Honorable Oregon State Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, members your committee will be addressing HB2379-1 and as Curry County Commissioner I would like to request that you give special consideration to HB 2379-1 that is important to our rural Southern Oregon and the counties of the famous Rogue River Basin.

Rep. David Brock Smith has worked with us to craft and sponsor a piece of legislation HB2379-1 that reaffirms the ability of our 3 counties (Jackson, Josephine and Curry) to seek a strong position in dealing with an uncooperative and under achieving U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in relation to the iconic Rogue River Spring Chinook salmon run. Rogue River Spring Chinook have been decimated by required but unfulfilled mitigation agreements to keep Rogue River Fisheries resource healthy and abundant as it was before the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers constructed Lost Creek Dam Project completed in 1977. The Rogue River Hatchery Spring Chinook run has fallen by 63% in last 14 years, the Wild spawning portion by 60% causing severe economic harm to Rogue Basin Counties and Ocean fisheries.

This piece of legislation gives the Rogue Basin counties a tool to negotiate with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and ODFW to avoid legal action by making it clear to all the 3 Rogue River Basin Counties have legal standing. By being able to show legal standing it will likely go along ways in avoiding legal action and do much to support positions of our counties that U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has violated directive and Authorization of Dam Construction and Operation.

Lost Creek Dam Project on the Rogue River blocked 33% of Wild Spring Chinook habitat and effects of the dam have reduced Rogue River Wild Spring Chinook population for both Wild and hatchery

by over 60% over last 14 years with an economic loss of over \$366,000,000.00 to state and local economies over the last 21 years. We request this help to get U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and ODFW to the negotiating table with a strong message, this cannot continue the contract with the counties and public needs to be upheld.

**I include this passage from ODFW Hatchery Management Document that shows what we are facing.**

From: Status of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Hatchery Mitigation Program with Oregon Prepared by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife February 8, 2017

“The Corps actions and failure to communicate, cooperate and collaborate in good faith with Oregon demonstrates their lack of commitment to their mitigation responsibilities. Despite ODFW’s leadership continuously communicating Oregon’s expectations regarding the federal governments’ mitigation responsibilities and the importance of these programs to Oregonians, the Corps leadership has continually failed to neither understand the role of these programs nor engage ODFW in discussions or negotiations regarding the fate of these programs. They have basically told Oregon what they are going to do, take it or leave it”.

ODFW 2017 .

With kindest regards, I remain,



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