



Native Fish Society Opposes House Bill 3150 and urges no further consideration by the Committee

March 19, 2021

Dear Chair Witt & Members of the House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources,

Guided by the best available science, Native Fish Society advocates for the recovery of wild, native fish and promotes the stewardship of the habitats that sustain us all. The science and history is clear: incubation boxes for salmonids, or hatch boxes, are not a beneficial tool to conserve or recover native anadromous (ocean-going) fish populations like salmon and steelhead.

Specifically, hatch boxes have the following problems:

- 1) Negative impacts to wild fish populations—There is an overwhelming scientific consensus that hatchery fish have a myriad of direct, negative consequences for wild fish including through competition and genetic (domestication) impacts. Hatch boxes in particular increase risks to wild populations as any fish that survive to adulthood (which is very few) return to Oregon's rivers, not fish hatcheries, where they spawn with wild fish.
- 2) Fail to contribute to sustaining or improving fisheries—Fish raised in hatch boxes are not marked (they do not have the adipose fin removed). In most fisheries, only marked fish are allowed to be retained for harvest while unmarked fish must be released.
- 3) Significantly complicate the agency's management of wild and hatchery fish populations—The state is obligated to meet the mandates of court orders, agreements, and management plans that dictate the percentage of hatchery origin fish (pHOS) that spawn with wild fish. Marking hatchery fish so as to distinguish them from wild fish is a critical management tool for monitoring and responding to key conservation metrics like pHOS.
- 4) Divert departmental resources—ODFW needs to focus available, limited funds on addressing the factors limiting the recovery of wild populations—Habitat, Hatcheries, Harvest, Hydropower, and Heat (climate change).

For these reasons, Native Fish Society urges you to oppose HB 3150. The state of Oregon has a history of utilizing hatch boxes, a tactic which was abandoned by ODFW due to their failure as a conservation tool and the problems they impart on managing both wild and hatchery fish populations. Let's not take the state backward as we seek to revive abundant, wild fish.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Fairbrother
Conservation Director