



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Fish and Wildlife

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**To: The Honorable Brad Witt, Chair
House Committee On Agriculture and Natural Resources**



**House Bill 3191
Cedric Cooney, Acting Fish Division Administrator
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. The department has no position on House Bill 3191 and would like to provide considerations around implementing the program called for in the bill.

The disposition of salmon/steelhead carcasses from ODFW operated hatcheries is currently guided by several policies that have been adopted by the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission, including the Native Fish Conversation policy, the Hatchery Management policy, and the Fish Health Management policy. The current policies provide the most flexibility to meet agency needs and address the diverse desires for surplus hatchery fish. The policies establish a priority list for disposition, with the highest priority being to ensure hatchery broodstock needs are met. In some years of low returns the department is unable to meet the broodstock goals so there are no surplus carcasses for distribution to other priorities. Another high priority is carcass placement in streams for the purposes of nutrient enrichment. The department annually places a high percentage of salmon carcasses into streams for this purpose. For example, in 2018 and 2019, a statewide average of 53.6% of returning adults collected at ODFW hatcheries were placed back to the stream through releases of live adults and carcasses for stream enrichment

HB 3191 would require the department to reprioritize the disposition of salmon/steelhead carcasses. The bill mandates that 50% of the carcasses from hatchery-produced fish that return to hatchery facilities be retained and returned to natural spawning areas. As noted above, the department is functionally meeting this intent through our existing policies, but is not constrained to having to meet this goal in years of low returns. Additionally, the department takes into account whether fish have been treated with antifungals or antibiotics during holding as well as Department of Environmental Quality constraints when determining which and how many carcasses to place in a given stream body.

Additionally, HB 3191 requires that eggs and carcass sales be prioritized 1) to Oregon small businesses in communities with high rates of unemployment and 2) to other small Oregon businesses. The department currently sells quality carcasses through a competitive bid process. The solicitation is broken into large and small packages. The package sizes provide bidding opportunities for both small and large business. The revenue generated is important to address deferred hatchery maintenance projects. The current bid process supports distribution of over

80,000 meals to Oregonians through the food share program. This is only made possible because larger distributors have the network and capacity to collect, process and distribute meals across the state.

Lastly, HB 3191 requires the department to conduct an analysis and report on annual return rates of hatchery produced fish with particular emphasis on the effect of the return rates on the state's ability to meet its obligations under the Pacific Salmon Treaty Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3631 to 3645). The department currently analyzes and reports on the fate of hatchery fish in ocean and freshwater fisheries, as well as returns to the hatchery based on the recovery of coded wire tags. An expanded analysis and reporting effort will require additional staff.

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