



## ASSOCIATION OF NORTHWEST STEELHEADERS

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April 8th, 2021

### **RE: Steelheaders Support for House Bill 3185**

Dear Chair Witt and House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee members:

My name is Betsy Emery. I am the Advocacy and Campaign Manager for the Association of Northwest Steelheaders. Our organization was founded in 1960 and is one of the oldest recreational fishing and conservation non-profit organizations in the Pacific Northwest. We have eight chapters in Oregon and one in Southwest Washington, representing over 800 members and nearly 5,000 supporters dedicated to enhancing and protecting fisheries and fish habitats for today and tomorrow, with a vision of abundant, sustainable fisheries and healthy watersheds.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 3185. This bill would prohibit spreading material in undisturbed wetlands during agricultural channel maintenance. The Agricultural Channel Maintenance Program adopted in 2019 (HB 2437) allows placing materials that were removed from the maintained agricultural channel into wetlands, even those that have not previously been disturbed. Placing this material, either temporarily or permanently into wetlands was not the intent of the original program. The intent was to limit where this type of material can be placed. Thus, there is a need to clarify this intent and specify what constitutes “farmed wetlands,” “previously impacted wetlands,” and “undisturbed wetlands.”

Northwest Steelheaders supports HB 3185-1 to ensure that the Agricultural Channel Maintenance Program operates as originally intended by clarifying that materials removed from agricultural channels during maintenance cannot be placed on or in undisturbed wetlands. This bill will protect the functions and values of existing wetlands.

Betsy Emery  
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