



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

**Department of Fish and Wildlife**

Office of the Director

4034 Fairview Industrial Drive SE

Salem, OR 97302

(503) 947-6044

FAX (503) 947-6202

odfw.com

**February 8, 2021**

**To: The Honorable James Manning Jr., Chair  
Senate Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness**



**Senate Bill 320**

**Shannon Hurn, Deputy Director**

**Steven Bergmann, ASD Administrator**

**Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate bill 320. The department endeavors to provide quality opportunities for all Oregonians and visitors interested in hunting, trapping, angling and shellfish harvest to be able to learn about and participate in those activities.

Senate bill 320 creates a new license type called a group license and adds nonprofit organizations that serve veterans and warrior transition units to the entities under ORS 497.162 that can receive the new license. It adds all veterans as well as active military personnel who are part of a warrior transition unit to the individuals who can qualify to participate under the group license to angle and take shellfish at no cost. Previously only veterans who were patients or residents of hospitals and domiciliaries were designated recipients.

SB 320 also removes the 30-person cap on the participants for each hospital/domiciliary, but limits each individual to participating under the group license to no more than three days annually. It additionally provides that those participating no longer need any other license, permit, tag or endorsements. This includes combined angling tags for salmon, steelhead, sturgeon or halibut, two-rod validation, hatchery salmon/steelhead harvest card, and depending on the angling location the Columbia River Basin Endorsement.

SB 320 creates additional challenges for the department. First the bill has an emergency clause, but requires a new type of license and the creation of rules to govern both the validity of an applying organization and the verification that participants qualify for the program. Currently ORS 497.162 limits the requester for licenses to directors of veterans' administration hospitals or domiciliary within the state, and each participant receives an individual license. New rules, additional administrative processes and reprogramming in our Electronic License System will take time to conduct.

The department is responsible for making sure each hunter and angler has the appropriate license, tag, stamp and or validation to harvest wildlife in Oregon under ORS 497.075. This requires allocating opportunity by age, residency, and other designations made by the Oregon Legislative Assembly. A critical aspect of allocating opportunity is ensuring that each individual is able to

lawfully engage in the activity and no revocation of hunting, angling or harvest of shellfish privileges has been ordered by a court. This requires identifying individuals as unique license holders, prohibiting persons identified under the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact from purchasing a license, and being compliant with the federal requirement to run a comparative search on social security numbers of annual license holders for Child Support Tracking purposes thru the Department of Justice database.

The department collects valuable harvest information from anglers that assists with determining managing fisheries and maintaining acceptable harvest levels. Federal oversight on sensitive fisheries requires extensive monitoring and reporting. The Electronic Licensing System implemented in 2018 was designed to collect real time harvest of halibut, sturgeon, salmon and steelhead information from individual license holders. The group license concept waives this streamlined, real time reporting and instead would be depending on reporting by a single Group License holder. Also, having a group license for multiple participants would result in an enforcement conflict; current regulations require harvest to be identified to the individual that harvested the species (ORS 497.075 and 497.400).

In SB 320 it is unclear whether the nonprofit organizations need to be Oregon based, and if participants can be both residents and nonresidents. For reference the Legislature has approved free combination hunting and angling licenses and shellfish licenses for Oregon residents who are veterans and have a 25% or greater disability rating. Additionally, the Legislature has authorized resident angling license prices (\$44) for individuals who are nonresidents but are a member of Uniformed Services (defined by ORS 497.006). Clarifying the resident status of participants would be helpful in determining the revenue impact of SB 320.

SB 320 will increase administrative costs, and reduce revenue for the department. The department receives federal funding from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) based on the number of unique paid license holders. Each free license, or participation under a group license in this scenario, with no requirement for an individual license or additional tag, permit, endorsement, etc. has a direct impact on license revenue, but can also not be counted to obtain federal-aid dollars. The department must make a \$2 profit on a license identifiable to a single individual in order to receive federal funding from the USFWS through the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program (SFR). This \$2 typically generates approximately \$14 in federal funding for fisheries management.

Thank you for consideration of our comments.

**CONTACT: Shannon Hurn, Deputy Director, (503) 947-6044**