



April 27, 2021

**To: The Honorable Zach Hudson, Chair
House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources**



**Senate Bill 59A
Shannon Hurn, Deputy Director for Fish and Wildlife Programs
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife**

Thank you for hearing our testimony on Senate bill 59A. SB 59 was originally introduced on behalf of the Department of Fish and Wildlife to address the sunset date of January 2, 2022, on the Columbia River Endorsement fee. As introduced SB 59 would have removed the sunset, making the program permanent but would not have altered the program in any other way. The Columbia River Endorsement is a fee assessed on recreational anglers, that was developed as part of SB 830 in 2013 to fund the reallocation and harvest framework changes made to commercial and recreational salmon fisheries in the mainstem Columbia River.

Senate bill 59A was amended and the original bill language is substantially modified. The department has no position on the bill as amended. Senate bill 59A extends the sunset date four years, and adds additional language to existing law that the Columbia River Endorsement fee may no longer be collected if the Fish & Wildlife Commission implements adaptive management of the Columbia River policy.

ORS 508.980 (2) states that the Fish & Wildlife Commission must provide for adaptive management actions to achieve economic or conservation objectives. SB 59A does not modify this requirement, but adds that if this occurs the endorsement fee, a significant funding source for the framework, will go away the following year.

The Columbia River Endorsement fee goes into a designated fund that was established by the legislature to provide funding to implement measures that enhance fisheries, optimize the economic benefits of fisheries, and advance native fish conservation related to the Commission's Columbia River fish management and reform (CR Reform) policy. The fee established by the Commission is \$9.75/year or \$1/day, and has generated on average \$2 million a biennium (\$9.6 m in total revenues) for tasks associated with CR Reform.

Activities supported by this fee are foundational to achieving the overall goals of the CR Reform policy. Funds from this source have been used to increase harvests in off-channel commercial fisheries by contributing to increased hatchery production in those areas. This increased production in off-channel areas was necessary to offset fishery allocation shifts. Revenue from the fee also provides better monitoring of both commercial and recreational fisheries, improves management of salmon, steelhead and sturgeon in the Columbia, and increases enforcement capacity of the Oregon State Police Fish and Wildlife unit.