

February 11, 2022



*By electronic submission to: <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2022R1/Testimony/HENVNR>

Testimony in Support of HB 4072 -2 Amendments

Dear Chair Marsh and members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee:

The Wild Salmon Center offers this testimony **in support** of the proposed -2 Amendments to HB 4072.

The Wild Salmon Center is dedicated to the conservation and recovery of wild salmon and steelhead across the Pacific Rim, including partnering with others to do so in Oregon and beyond. We actively engaged in the recently-concluded *Rogue-South Coast Multi-Species Conservation and Management Plan* (or “RSP”) process conducted by the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW) to guide management of steelhead, salmon, and cutthroat trout. This was a multi-year, multi-stakeholder collaborative effort that resulted in compromises across many interests—including wild-fish and hatchery advocates. The Oregon Fish & Wildlife Commission tied off the RSP process in a series of important votes attracting significant public attention and input last December.

The -2 Amendments to HB 4072 would advance key monitoring components of the RSP, specifically relevant to the following RSP provision:

“Two new steelhead fishing authorizations will be implemented to track overall fishery participation, improve reporting of wild steelhead harvest, and generate funds for winter steelhead monitoring in the planning area[.] At the proposed authorization costs, roughly \$80,000 per year will be generated for monitoring.” [*Rogue-South Coast Multi-Species Conservation and Management Plan*](#) at p. 82 (As adopted December 17, 2021).

Monitoring is a fundamentally important and often overlooked component of science-based fisheries management. And, when it comes to concerning trends in Oregon’s South Coast Steelhead, resources for monitoring are more important now than ever. This is evidenced by an [ODFW press release today](#) that references RSP monitoring in the context of present-moment concerns over low streamflows and human impacts to wild winter steelhead and salmon.

The two new authorizations to be advanced by ODFW through its angling license and reporting system are: (1) a “Steelhead Validation” required for all winter steelhead anglers in the RSP basins and Sixes

River; and (2) a “Wild Steelhead Harvest Card” in connection with the mandatory reporting requirements for anglers that catch and retain wild steelhead.

The legislature’s approval of HB 4072 with the -2 Amendments is essential to authorizing and implementing the new Validation and Harvest Card system, and enabling much needed monitoring. Doing so now is also critical given the nature of the RSP agreement and the needs that wild steelhead and this fishery face. Harvest of wild winter steelhead was and is an issue of controversy within the RSP process. Advancing much needed monitoring connected to the continuation of this fishery is a conservation, angling, and sound-science priority.

We are very appreciative of Rep. Brock Smith’s effort to request and advance the HB 4072 -2 Amendments, as well as Rep. Gomberg’s accommodation of them into this bill. We urge the Legislature’s full passage of HB 4072 as modified by the -2 Amendments.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.

Sincerely,

Brett Brownscombe,
On behalf of the Wild Salmon Center

bbrownscombe@wildsalmoncenter.org