

HB 2966 -4 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

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Meeting Dates: 2/14, 2/28

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Authorizes the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to waive requirements related to fish health, immediate release, and the use of artificial baits for smallmouth bass or walleye angling competitions if the department determines that limiting a population of these species would benefit native fish species or the ecological health of the body of water.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-4 Authorizes the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to additionally permit any person to remove and dispose of a nonindigenous aquatic species from a specified area if the department determines that the species is adversely affecting any population of native fish species within that area.

BACKGROUND:

Oregon sport fishing regulations prohibit anglers from wasting fish after catching it. This means that any fish that is not caught for consumption must be released. Smallmouth bass and walleye are nonnative freshwater fish, whose diet consists of crayfish, amphibians, insects, and smaller fish, including juvenile Chinook salmon. During some parts of the sport fishing season, juvenile salmon has been found to make up approximately 18.5 percent of walleye diet. In Oregon, walleye populate the Willamette, Columbia, and Snake Rivers. Smallmouth bass can be found in most large rivers in Oregon as well the lower sections of their tributaries.

House Bill 2966 would authorize the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to waive certain requirements for smallmouth bass and walleye angling competitions if the department determines that limiting a population of these species would benefit native fish species or the ecological health of the body of water.