

**Paul L Evans**  
**STATE REPRESENTATIVE**  
**DISTRICT 20**



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

January 22, 2023

The Honorable Jeff Golden, Chair  
Senate Committee on Natural Resources  
82<sup>nd</sup> Legislative Assembly  
Oregon State Capitol

Ref: Support for Senate Bill 65

Chair Golden:

I write this letter of support for Senate Bill 65 (SB 65) as someone who is usually highly skeptical of the "privatization" of government function/s. Most of the time, I believe the private sector should not be doing something the public sector could and should be doing. However, sometimes the government proves itself wholly incapable of performing a critical function. There are situations like this one where the government agency entrusted to keep the public trust has proven itself unworthy.

SB 65 requires the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to purchase at least 20% of annual trout stocks from the private sector. This bill largely aligns with the pre-2020 relationships between ODFW and private vendors. It is necessary because of the recent failures in fish production and sustainability. As someone who has been frustrated with the agency's senior management, especially within the fish division, over the past several years – the critical gap filled by certain and specific private sector vendors – cannot be overstated.

Oregon must rebuild our traditional prominence as a place where people can enjoy the splendid bounty of our natural world. This demands better management of game (an issue for another day) and far better management of our hatchery and native fishery stocks. We cannot allow the agency to continue as it has. Many of our publicly owned hatcheries demand maintenance and modernization investments. Our fisheries teams need far more support in protecting healthy stocks and containing unhealthy stocks; we need to recognize that our natural world is changing and that our methods must adjust accordingly. In the meantime, we must send a clear message to agency leadership that personalities and turf wars have no place in the serious business of making wise choices about our at-risk fisheries.

Please send a clear message and move SB 65 onto the Joint Committee on Ways & Means and to the Floor so we can secure at least a portion of the trout fishery before it is too late. Thank you for considering this measure. I believe it is the right path forward, and I would be a co-sponsor if the rules allowed it. Please let me know if you have questions or require additional information about this letter.

Respectfully,

Cc: Senate Committee on Natural Resources