



ASSOCIATION OF NORTHWEST STEELHEADERS

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Re: SB 5509

Dear Natural Resources Joint Subcommittee members,

The Association of Northwest Steelheaders, as one of the oldest fish and conservation organizations, in Oregon we appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony regarding Senate Bill 5509 regarding the state budget. Our organization has long history of providing volunteers for a wide variety of ODFW programs. We hope to continue that work alongside the agency during coming decades as we value the partnership. In our opinion ODFW is an important and efficiently operated agency. We support the core budget coming from the desk of Governor Tina Kotek.

However, we request you consider including some of the original Policy Options Packages (POPs) from the budget that are not in the current draft of the bill. We believe that there needs to be inclusion of POPs related to fish passage, habitat division operations, conservation strategies, implementing climate change policies, and improving non-native fish management. Our opinion is that these pieces of the original proposed budget will help the agency to more fully meet its wide range of responsibilities.

For a variety of reasons, it is very important for our state to keep improving its hatchery system. We have long been concerned about the increasing maintenance needs for many of the existing facilities. We understand that the agency is currently reviewing the status and needs for our state's hatcheries, and we ask legislators to pay close attention and support this effort.

Thank you for your consideration,

Tom Vanderplaat, Co-President

Bob Oleson, Vice President

Jason Wedemeyer, Executive Director