

3-23-23

Dear Oregon Senators and congressional members,

I strongly support HB 3086 either as written or with Amendment 2. Amendment 1 basically does nothing and should be excluded.

It should be clear by now that Eastern Oregonians are tired of being treated like a battered wife in a toxic relationship. We have basically no say in our government and we are constantly being forced to except whatever Western Oregon liberals want to throw at us regardless of consequence. The Oregon State Fish and Game commission is a great example of this situation.

Currently the commission is composed of Governor appointed people from the 7 Congressional districts. Needless to say that leaves Eastern Oregon with little say over the policies that the commission adopts as nearly all of the commissioners are based on the west side predominantly from the population centers of the Willamette Valley. Also currently the commission only has 2 members who have ever even hunted in their life and only 1 could even remotely be considered a dedicated hunter.

In Eastern Oregon we are outdoors people and our hunting and fishing heritage is one of the most important things to our philosophical view point. Having a ODFW commission that is completely out of touch with our values is one of the major factors (among many, many others) why nearly all East side counties have voted to be annexed into Idaho where our hunting and fishing heritage is not only protected by the State consecution, but where their commissioners are in touch with outdoors men and women across their state.

HB 3086 would require better representation of ODFW commissioners and would at least require the Governor to choose people from all areas of Oregon to oversee the department's affairs. Since the vast majority of our wild lands are located on the East side of the Cascades this seems like it would be common sense to anyone who wants the best for Oregon's wildlife.

Unfortunaly this bill would still not guarantee the Governor would choose qualified people with actual real world experience to sit on the commission but at least the Governor would be required to choose from a pool of people that at least reside in all areas of the state where wildlife lives. A constitutional amendment making hunting and fishing a constitutionally protected right (such as Idaho has) would be another good step, as would requiring at least half of ODFW commissioners be active and supportive of hunting and fishing rights on Oregon. Since the funds that are collected by ODFW are predominantly from hunters and fishermen common sense should dictate that the commission be made up of constituents that have actual experience as hunters and fishermen. Those topics should be considered separately but HB 3086 is a great first step to fixing our currently very broken wildlife management agency.

As a critical first step, I urge you to pass HB 3086 either as written or with Amendment 2. I am a lifelong Eastern Oregonian who is an avid Bow hunter as well as a small business owner, husband, Father, and Grandfather. It is time that ALL areas of the State get a voice in how ODFW does its work so the outdoor traditions we all love on the East side can be preserved for future generations.

Sincerely

Mike Slinkard- John Day