

May 4, 2023

Testimony before the Senate Committee on Rules

Subject: SB 1095 – Testimony in **opposition** of SB 1095 unless reflected with the -1 amendment

Chair Lieber, Vice Chair Knopp, and members of the committee,

My name is Ian Isaacson and I am the Board Co-Chair for the Oregon Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers (OR BHA), which represents over 1,200 members and 6,000 supporters in Oregon. Our mission is to preserve Oregon's outdoor heritage of hunting and fishing in natural settings by promoting education and advocating for wild public lands, waters, and wildlife. OR BHA is providing testimony in opposition to SB 1095 unless language with the -1 amendment is included that mirrors the regional representation model described in HB 3086 with the -4 amendment.

OR BHA opposes SB 1095 unless it includes language from the -1 amendment that reflects the regional representation model described in HB 3086 with the -4 amendment. The current proposal for SB 1095, which aims to provide straightforward solutions for all commissions connected to congressional districts, is not adequate for addressing the restructuring requirements of the new congressional districts for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Commission.

HB 3086, which has already garnered support from over 1,000 individuals, seeks to shift the ODFW Commission away from congressional districts towards a more regionally diverse model based on the five river basin management areas. This change would ensure equitable and diverse representation that truly captures Oregon's abundant and valued fish and wildlife resources.

It is crucial that the Fish and Wildlife Commission includes members who represent a variety of backgrounds, experiences, knowledge, and interests in order to effectively conserve and manage wildlife in the public trust for all Oregonians. The current statute, however, aligns commission representation with population density, leaving a vast majority of the state underrepresented despite being home to essential habitat and wildlife.

Adopting the river basin model proposed in HB 3086 would create a commission that not only encompasses diverse backgrounds and experiences but also has invaluable local knowledge of fish and wildlife habitats and populations on a regional level. This approach would ensure proportional representation for Oregon's population, as the Governor would still nominate commission members who are then confirmed by the Oregon Senate.

In addition to the five river basin management area positions, we recommend retaining the current statute requiring one at-large member from both the west and east of the summit of the Cascade Mountains. This would maintain the 7-member commission structure. The five river basin management areas already serve as the regional representation for the Oregon Water Resources



Commission (ORS 536.022), ensuring equitable representation for all Oregonians on critical water policy issues. Applying this model to wildlife and habitat management policies would similarly provide fair representation.

We propose that the governing statute continues to require Commission appointees to possess a background in natural resources in order to understand the various interests and stakeholder viewpoints. Additionally, commission appointments should be nominated by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate, as is the current practice.

We urge the committee to oppose SB 1095 and support HB 3086 as the primary bill for restructuring the ODFW Commission. HB 3086 is widely backed by the majority of Oregon's tribal nations. We endorse the idea that Commissioner qualifications should encompass experience working with Tribes and an understanding of the profound, enduring connections Oregon's federally recognized Tribes have with the lands, water, and natural resources governed by the Commission. Implementing regional representation and qualifications for understanding natural resources and tribal knowledge will guarantee that appointed Commissioners comprehend the distinct challenges facing landscapes east of the Cascades.

OR BHA is confident that this much-needed update will establish a truly diverse Commission structure, ensuring that management decisions for all of Oregon's magnificent natural resources, wildlife, and habitats are properly represented.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the composition of the guiding body for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. Please feel free to contact me at [oregon@backcountryhunters.org](mailto:oregon@backcountryhunters.org) if you require additional information.

Sincerely,

Ian Isaacson | Co-Chair, Oregon Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers



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HUNTERS & ANGLERS**  
OREGON



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