

SB 221 -5 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

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Meeting Dates: 2/19, 3/17, 3/19

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs the State Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to study the salmon and trout enhancement program. Directs the ODFW to report to interim committees of the Legislative Assembly related to natural resources no later than September 15, 2026.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-5 The measure requires the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to encourage organizations to create and fund fall chinook fish incubation nursery program to raise fall chinook fish in waterways in Coos County and to report to the Legislative Assembly by September 15, 2026.

Detailed Summary

Replaces measure. Requires Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to encourage one or more entities to establish and fund projects under a **fall chinook fish incubation nursery program** (Program) for the rearing of fall chinook salmonids on salmon-bearing or potentially salmon-bearing waterways located in Coos County within 100 miles of the Pacific Ocean. Requires ODFW to report on the establishment and operation of the Program as well as any findings or recommendations to the interim committee related to natural resources no later than September 15, 2026. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

- Minimal Fiscal Impact
- No Revenue Impact

BACKGROUND:

In 1981 the Legislative Assembly established the Salmon and Trout Enhancement Program (STEP). The purpose of the STEP program is to “achieve the recovery and sustainability of the state’s native salmon and trout through the education of Oregon’s citizens and their involvement with fish management efforts.” STEP is funded by a combination of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Sport Fish Restoration (SFR) grant program and ODFW funds (75 percent federal with 25 percent state match). The types of projects conducted through STEP include:

- Education and Program Development - Including classroom incubators (also known as the “Fish Eggs-to-Fry Program”), presentations, classes, volunteer training, tours, displays, printed materials, equipment, construction, and maintenance.
- Inventory and Monitoring - Including stream and riparian habitat surveys and other methods used to study, monitor or inventory fish life history, presence, distribution, or abundance.
- Habitat Improvement activities - Including placement of large woody debris in streams, riparian protection and restoration, fish passage improvement and fish carcass placement for stream nutrient enrichment.
- Fish Culture - Including producing fish to supplement natural fish production, augment fisheries, or, in the case of the classroom egg incubation program, provide educational opportunities.
- Fishing Access and Opportunity - Including the 25-year Angling Enhancement Plan to outline strategies for providing diverse, stable, and productive angling opportunities and facilitate an increase in angling participation.
- STEP is funded by a combination of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Sport Fish Restoration (SFR) grant program and ODFW funds (75 percent federal with 25 percent state match). T

This summary has not been adopted or officially endorsed by action of the committee.

- Since that time thousands of volunteers have assisted Oregon's fisheries through their involvement in STEP. They have donated money, materials, equipment, and countless hours of time and labor. STEP volunteers have completed stream habitat restoration work, conducted surveys, helped with education projects, and hatched and reared several million salmon and trout eggs—all because they care about fish and fish habitat.