

SB 512 -2 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 3/27

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Appropriates \$2 million dollars from the General Fund to the State Fish and Wildlife Commission to operate a summer steelhead hatchery at the Rock Creek Hatchery and release the fish into the North Umpqua River.

Fiscal impact: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued.

Revenue impact: May have revenue impact, but no statement yet issued.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Amendment potential and stakeholder conversations

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-2 Directs the Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to study the effects of water temperature and predation by nonnative fish on hatchery releases of coho, winter steelhead, and chinook salmon from the Rock Creek Hatchery, and to identify alternative release strategies to reduce predation and assess how rearing practices affect the ability of spring Chinook salmon to return to the Rock Creek Hatchery. Reduces appropriation to the State Wildlife Commission from \$2 million to \$1,400,000. Requires ODFW to submit a report on their findings to the interim committees of the Legislative Assembly related to wildlife no later than September 15, 2026. Sunsets June 30, 2027.

BACKGROUND:

ODFW manages 33 hatcheries in Oregon, with hatchery programs guided by policies like the Native Fish Conservation Policy and the Fish Hatchery Management Policy. The goal is to balance fish management with the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds, Endangered Species Act guidelines, and other relevant regulations.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife's Rock Creek Hatchery, constructed in 1925, was located across the North Umpqua River. It produced fall and spring Chinook, coho, steelhead (summer and winter), and rainbow trout, serving as a site for adult collection, spawning, incubation, and rearing. The hatchery was destroyed in the 2020 Archie Creek Fire.

In 2022, the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission decided to eliminate the summer steelhead hatchery program and not rebuild the Rock Creek Hatchery. In 2023, the state allocated \$1 million to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to develop a hatchery resiliency plan addressing sustainability, resilience, climate impact, and competition.