

SB 221 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

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Meeting Dates: 4/23

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure requires the 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. It directs ODFW to assist with ensuring that established programs are scientifically sound and requires ODFW to report on the Program, including findings and recommendations, to an interim committee related to natural resources by September 15, 2026. The measure declares an emergency and takes effect on its passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Since 2018, the wild Coquille fall Chinook salmon population has declined. According to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), from 2018 to 2021, there was a low of 275 adult fall Chinook salmon returning to spawn and a high of approximately 900. Previously, wild adult returns averaged about 8,000 - 10,000 fish yearly. According to ODFW the ability of the population to sustain itself is at risk.

According to ODFW's 2023-2024 legislative Report on the Hatchbox Program, incubation nurseries or hatchboxes are small-scale fish egg incubation devices that are placed either at the edge of a streambank or directly instream and from which salmon or steelhead fry emerge into the stream's natural environment. Fertilized eggs from selected parental broodstock are placed in the hatchboxes and, subsequently, unfed, unmarked fry voluntarily emerge and enter into the waterbody.

FISCAL: Has minimal fiscal impact

REVENUE: No revenue impact

SENATE VOTE: Ayes 26; Nays 4; Excused 0