

SB 221 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Carrier: Sen. Smith DB

Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Action Date: 03/19/25

Action: Do pass with amendments. (Printed A-Eng.)

Vote: 5-0-0-0

Yeas: 5 - Golden, Pham, Robinson, Smith DB, Sollman

Fiscal: Has minimal fiscal impact

Revenue: No revenue impact

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

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure requires the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to encourage organizations to create and fund projects under a 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. Senate Bill 221A declares an emergency and is effective on passage.

Detailed Summary

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.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Application of Act to exclusively fall Chinook salmon
- Historical use and outcomes of incubation nurseries
- Current salmonid management practices in Coos County waterways
- Prioritization of efforts to address declining salmonid populations

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Replaces measure.

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 the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (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.