

SB 512 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire

Action Date: 03/27/25

Action: Do pass with amendments. Refer to Ways and Means by prior reference. (Printed A-Eng).

Vote: 5-0-0-0

Yeas: 5 - Girod, Golden, Nash, Prozanski, Taylor

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

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Meeting Dates: 3/27

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure appropriates \$1.4 million dollars from the General Fund to the State Fish and Wildlife Commission for 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. It 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, and sunsets June 30, 2027.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- 2020 Archie Creek Fire
- ODFW summer steelhead program
- Predatory fish, seal and sea lion predation on salmonids
- Hatchery infrastructure and production

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

The amendment 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, 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. It 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, and sunsets the measure on June 30, 2027.

BACKGROUND:

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) manages 33 hatcheries in Oregon, with hatchery programs guided by policies that include 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 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 ODFW to develop a hatchery resiliency plan addressing sustainability, resilience, climate impact, and competition.