



January 28, 2025

Representative Ken Helm, Co-Chair
Representative Mark Owens, Co-Chair
Representative Sarah Finger McDonald, Vice-Chair
House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Re: Trout Unlimited Supports House Bill 2163 (Fishing Permits & Accessibility)

Dear Co-Chairs Helm and Owens, Vice-Chair Finger McDonald, and Members of the Committee,

Trout Unlimited (TU) is a non-profit dedicated to conserving coldwater fish such as trout, salmon, and steelhead, and their habitats. TU has more than 350,000 members and supporters nationwide. The Oregon members of TU are affiliated with the grassroots Oregon Council of Trout Unlimited (OCTU).

TU and OCTU support House Bill 2163 because it improves accessibility to recreational fishing and shellfish harvesting opportunities in Oregon.

Under the recreational angling and shellfish harvesting laws, individuals generally must physically hold and operate their own fishing rods, reels, clam guns, and other equipment. Existing law allows an exception to this for certain physical or military-service limitations only. HB 2163 would remove existing barriers to fishing and shellfish harvesting opportunities for someone that “has an intellectual or developmental disability that prevents the person from holding or operating angling or shellfish harvesting equipment, including rods, reels, clam guns, shovels, or other equipment typically used for angling or for harvesting shellfish.”

TU and OCTU are typically associated with our on-ground restoration and fish passage projects, but we also work to improve Oregonians’ access to use and enjoyment of this state’s bountiful natural resources. For instance, TU’s Clackamas River Chapter holds an overnight youth camp every summer that provides science and angling instruction for about 10 kids; nearly 300 children have now attended the camp. At the national level, TU’s Service Partnership provides outdoor events and community experiences for veterans, active duty military, and first responders—many of whom are new to angling.

Fishing and shellfish harvesting are classic Oregon pastimes. We support this bill because it removes barriers to entry and participation in these activities.

Thank you for considering our comments, and please let us know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

James Fraser
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Mark Rogers
Chair
Oregon Council of Trout Unlimited
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