



January 30, 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 2345 (Hatchery Maintenance and Fish Monitoring)

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.

TU supports HB 2345 because it will help address significant funding shortfalls for both hatchery maintenance *and* fish monitoring efforts.

House Bill 2345 would repeal statutes related to the Oregon Hatchery Research Center (OHRC) and its governing Board, repurpose its Fund (which typically receives about \$1.1 million per biennium from angling license surcharges), and re-direct the Fund expenditures on a 50/50 basis to hatchery maintenance and fish monitoring efforts.

ODFW faces approximately \$200 million in deferred maintenance, as well as significant cuts in the Governor's Budget to the Department's fish "monitoring" efforts (e.g., spawning surveys, redd counts, and other efforts to quantify numbers of hatchery and wild fish and how those stocks interact). At the same time, OHRC's long-time research facility is threatened by an active landslide, and ODFW has stated that major lines of study at OHRC have recently ended or are near completion.

TU recognizes the community interest in OHRC; indeed, TU staff and members have served on the Board in the past. However, the OHRC program has reached a decision point at the very same time that ODFW's budget is in dire need of additional *and* predictable funding. Now is a good time to address these overlapping issues. HB 2345 proposes a reasonable pathway for adjusting the purpose of the OHRC angling surcharge and re-directing those funds toward other important agency efforts that support fisheries for both hatchery and wild fish.

Thank you for considering this input, and please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

James Fraser
Oregon Policy Director
Trout Unlimited
james.fraser@tu.org