



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

RE: Support for HB 2345 Renaming the Oregon Hatchery Research Center Fund

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

Wild Salmon Center (WSC) is a nonprofit organization based in Oregon that works to protect and restore healthy forests, abundant clean water, and thriving wild salmon populations across the state and the Pacific Rim. **WSC supports HB 2345, renaming the Oregon Hatchery Research Center Fund as the Oregon Hatchery Monitoring and Maintenance Fund.**

HB 2345, introduced by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), would repurpose an Oregon angling license surcharge to fund hatchery maintenance and monitoring. In 2024, ODFW contracted an independent evaluation of the state-owned hatchery system¹. This evaluation indicated over \$200 million in deferred maintenance at our state-owned hatcheries. This bill would allocate over \$600 thousand each biennium to hatchery infrastructure maintenance, addressing those deferred maintenance needs. Coinciding with hatchery maintenance, ODFW's 2025-2027 Governor's Requested Budget cut \$900 thousand for their Coastal Monitoring Program². This program provides essential information for the department to make informed decisions about hatchery fish, wild and hatchery population health, harvest rates, the productivity of hatchery programs, and impacts on our fisheries. HB 2345 would allocate over \$600 thousand each biennium to fund this monitoring. Without these monitoring funds, ODFW's ability to adequately monitor and manage populations of salmon and steelhead will be limited.

The science and research on hatchery production will continue at other locations and with other funding resources in the Pacific Northwest. ODFW will staff Dr. Seth White, Ph.D. scientist and Director of the Hatchery Research Science Center, and Dr. Kathleen O'Malley, Ph.D. fisheries scientist and geneticist, to continue critical research at Oregon State University.

WSC looks forward to the passing of HB 2345, which would repurpose funds for more critical ODFW needs, such as hatchery maintenance and monitoring. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

¹ Contractor reports from Hatchery Resilience Evaluation:

<https://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/hatchery/resilience.asp>

² Governors Requested Budget allocated to ODFW:

https://www.dfw.state.or.us/agency/budget/docs/25-27/2025-27%20GRB_ODFW%20635.pdf

INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Blaine', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kirk Blaine
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Wild Salmon Center
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