



February 10, 2025

House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Re: Support for HB 2170 (Watercraft Check Stations) and HB 2982 (Boat Fees for AIS Efforts)

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

Trout Unlimited is known in Oregon and throughout the nation for its work in restoring riparian and instream habitats in collaboration with government agencies, conservation organizations, and private landowners. The 3,400 Oregon members of Trout Unlimited are affiliated with our grassroots entity, the Oregon Council of Trout Unlimited (OCTU).

On behalf of the 3,400 members of Trout Unlimited in Oregon, we ask you to move HB 2170 and HB 2982 forward because both bills will improve our State's efforts to defend against aquatic invasive species (AIS) being introduced or established in Oregon waterways.

AIS such as zebra mussels, quagga mussels, and golden mussels are not yet established in Oregon, but there are populations in other states. Recreational and commercial boats are constantly moving around the West, which presents great risk of AIS contamination in Oregon because AIS can cling to the bottom of boats, contaminate bilge water, and otherwise be hidden on boats or trailers.

OCTU is deeply concerned about the risk of AIS introductions, because AIS typically wreak havoc on native aquatic species. HB 2170 and HB 2982 have different particulars but related purposes; both will shore up our state's detection and decontamination systems for AIS.

House Bill 2170

Oregon operates some watercraft AIS check stations in high-priority transportation corridors, but we need more. Existing law requires state agencies to operate check stations, but fortunately, there are other entities such as irrigation districts and other local governments or service districts that are interested in setting up and operating more

stations. HB 2170 would authorize state agencies to enter intergovernmental agreements with those parties to operate additional check stations, inspect watercraft for AIS, and to decontaminate recreational or commercial watercraft. It is a reasonable and cost-effective policy proposal with great potential to protect our state's aquatic resources.

House Bill 2982

Most boaters in Oregon currently pay a nominal fee to support the state's AIS prevention programs. HB 2982 would make minor updates to that existing boat fee system by updating applicable fees and making small adjustments to the language about which boats must have an AIS stamp. *All* boats present a risk of introducing AIS to Oregon, and therefore, it is fair for a broad spectrum of boaters to support the State's important programs for protecting and conserving healthy aquatic habitats. Like the watercraft check station bill, HB 2982 is smart policy and OCTU believes the cost adjustments are reasonable and relatively insignificant.

Please bring forward and approve HB 2170 and HB 2982.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark W. Rogers".

Mark W. Rogers
Chair, Oregon Council of Trout Unlimited