

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

Oregon State Capitol

900 Court St. NE

Salem, OR 97301

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

In my previous testimony, I outlined the pressing need for a more inclusive permit system to prevent the spread of invasive species in our waterways. Below, I offer additional context related to the [Explore America's Recreation and Learn Act \(Explore Act, H.R. 6492\)](#) as well as TRCP's Aquatic Invasive Species Commission findings, which can be found in the [TRCP AIS Commission Report](#).

Recent testimony questioned whether Section 321 of the *Explore Act* might conflict with Oregon's state-level AIS strategies. In fact, Section 321 aims to coordinate and harmonize AIS measures across the country, which would not limit implementation of HB 2982—in fact, the opposite is true. By broadening Oregon's AIS permit system now, we position the state to:

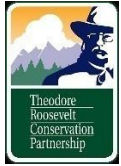
- **Integrate Federal Guidance:** Section 321 encourages uniform best practices, including inspection and decontamination standards, without preempting state leadership. A stronger Oregon program can adapt smoothly to these federal recommendations as they develop.
- **Strengthen Grant Eligibility:** State-level user-based funding not only secures immediate resources but can also serve as a match for future federal AIS grants, allowing Oregon to amplify its local investments.

As noted in my prior testimony, the TRCP AIS Commission emphasized that early prevention is both cost-effective and essential. Here, I would like to underscore two additional insights:

- **Vulnerabilities in Small Watercraft:** Even though a 10-foot vessel may seem negligible, it can still harbor and transport invasive species. By including these craft in the permit requirement, HB 2982 mitigates a well-documented risk factor that has historically been overlooked.
- **Adaptable Funding Model:** Commission members—ranging from state agency leaders to nonprofit conservationists—agreed that a modest, user-based permit model can be easily scaled or adjusted to respond to emerging threats, changing federal guidelines, or new partnership opportunities.

Thank you for your consideration of these points. I remain available for any questions and appreciate your continued dedication to safeguarding Oregon's waters.

**Sincerely,**



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APPENDIX: Excerpt from Section 321 of the Explore Act (H.R. 6492)

SEC. 321. WATERCRAFT INSPECTION AND INVASIVE SPECIES MITIGATION.

(a) Coordination of Guidance.—The Secretary [of the Interior], in coordination with the Chief of Engineers, shall develop or update guidance for watercraft inspection and decontamination practices to prevent the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species in waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States.

(b) Voluntary Alignment by States.—States are encouraged to align watercraft inspection programs with Federal guidance to achieve consistency, reduce duplication, and enhance the effectiveness of aquatic invasive species prevention.

(c) Funding and Assistance.—From amounts made available to carry out this section, the Secretary may—

Award grants to States, Tribes, and other eligible entities to support the establishment or expansion of inspection and decontamination stations;

Provide technical assistance to States for the development of public education campaigns regarding aquatic invasive species; and

Coordinate multi-jurisdictional efforts that enable consistent inspection protocols for vessels operating across State boundaries.

(d) Rule of Construction.—Nothing in this section shall preempt or limit the authority of a State to implement or maintain any requirement relating to the prevention, detection, or mitigation of aquatic invasive species that is more stringent than the Federal guidance developed under this section.