



Senator Janeen Sollman, Chair
Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

February 20, 2025

RE: Wild Salmon Center Opposes SB 221-3 Establishing a Hatchbox Program in Coos County.

Dear Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Brock Smith, 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. We recognize the complexity of fisheries management in Oregon, and work towards solutions that are grounded in science, aligned with forthcoming recommendations from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) Hatchery Blueprint process, supportive of Tribal and cultural values, and that represent strategic investments for all Oregonians. **WSC opposes SB 221-3, which would establish a hatchbox program in Coos County and within 100 miles of the Pacific Ocean.**

SB 221-3 requires ODFW to implement an “incubation nursery” program, also known as a hatchbox program, in waterways in Coos County. ODFW historically used hatchboxes to augment salmon populations, but due to the low survival rate, it abandoned the program because of high costs for taxpayers and low returns on investment.

Fish produced from hatchboxes undermine the ability of ODFW to conduct and manage adult mark selective fisheries upon which anglers rely. Except for a limited Coho and steelhead fishery in the Coquille and Coos basins, salmon and steelhead reared in hatchboxes cannot be harvested by anglers because they are not marked as hatchery origin.

When restoring salmon and steelhead populations, WSC encourages the Legislature to make strategic investments backed by science. Multiple limiting factors affect salmonid populations in Coos County, including warmer water temperatures, low water flows, invasive species predation, and increased habitat degradation. Oregon should focus investments in these areas to better support the conservation and recovery of salmon in Coos County.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposed legislation. **WSC opposes SB 221-3 due to the poor performance of hatchboxes and the need for Oregon to invest in other limiting factors that will restore salmon and steelhead on the Oregon Coast.**

Sincerely,

Kirk Blaine
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Wild Salmon Center
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