



HB 2342- ODFW fee increase - SUPPORT

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

The Conservation Angler appreciates the opportunity to provide support for this bill. The Conservation Angler is a science and advocacy organization dedicated to the conservation and protection of wild fish and the ecosystems supporting them throughout the Pacific Northwest.

TCA supports HB 2342 because it aligns and supports our mission to protect and restore wild fish and native wildlife and their habitats. The Conservation Angler supports the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's (ODFW) mission to protect and enhance Oregon's fish and wildlife populations and their habitats for use and enjoyment by present and future generations.

However, minimal General Fund disbursements, dramatic inflation, and a lack of conservation priority spending, and costs are threatening the ability for ODFW to implement that mission.

The fee adjustments in HB 2342 will barely help ODFW to keep pace with increasing costs to operate and sustain core programs and employ skilled biologists tasked with managing Oregon's fish, wildlife, and habitats. Legislative approval for this fee increase will help ODFW move forward with real conservation achievements – well represented by their ongoing success recovering ESA-listed Oregon coastal coho salmon.

It has been a decade since the last fee adjustment legislation and these actions are well overdue.

Even with diversified wildlife and conservation funding sources increasing, fishing, and hunting license fees will continue to be the primary funding source for conservation for all fish, wildlife, and habitats for the benefit of all Oregonians – those enjoying Oregon's native fish and wildlife.

Regardless of the direction of policy decisions yet to be made in this session, ODFW must be granted the fee increases to simply keep up with the challenges facing this state agency.

TCA's support for this fee increase does not come with conditions as stated by some organizations - as the value of the opportunity to hunt and fish in Oregon is priceless.

One reason Oregon faces the challenges it does is exactly because it has invested too much money in a failing hatchery system, a system which actually depresses our state-wide wild fish populations. Oregon's appetite for harvested salmon and steelhead is larger than our state budget and the productive capacity of Oregon's river ecosystems.

Demanding this fee increase come with increased random hatchery production and a rebuild at Rock Creek Hatchery is blind to the reality of climate change and a failure to understand the scientific evidence supporting the importance of wild fish.

The fee increase is fair and timely,

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