



COW CREEK BAND OF UMPQUA TRIBE OF INDIANS

GOVERNMENT OFFICES

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Testimony for Michael Rondeau

Senate Natural Resources and Wildfire Committee

Senate Bill 512

March 27, 2025

Chair Golden, Vice Chair Nash, Senators Girod, Prozanski and Taylor:

For the record, my name is Michael Rondeau. I am an enrolled member of the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians and the Tribal Government Chief Executive Officer.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak about the -2 amendment for Senate Bill 512.

I also want to thank Senator Brock Smith and Representative Osborne for their work on this bill. And to you, Chair Golden, on behalf of our Tribe, thank you for allowing us the time we needed to work on the proposal we are presenting today.

For background, the Cow Creek Umpqua are a river people.

Harvesting fish is part of our culture. We cannot practice our traditional lifeways when we lose this connection to this piece of our culture. And if we cannot practice our culture by fishing, our relationship with the fish is broken, and so is our promise to take care of them. Fish give their lives so we can survive, and we must do our part to care for them and their habitat in a relationship of reciprocity.

We practice ceremonies to ensure their health and return to their home waters. We approach natural resource management with a commitment to ensuring the resources available today are also abundant seven generations into the future.

That is why Rock Creek Hatchery is so important to us. It has served us all – the Tribe and local anglers and supported research and other conservation goals.

We believe in an all-fish approach.

We want robust returns of native wild fish and are committed partners with local governments, the state, and other organizations that share that goal. We also believe hatcheries have a role to play. With responsible management and monitoring, hatchery systems can support fish propagation in parallel with efforts to restore native fish populations.

That is our goal with Senate Bill 512 and the co-management partnership with ODFW in the Umpqua basin – as part of a statewide solution to this critical balance.

We understand – too well – the budget constraints for state government. Our tribal government is managing comparable or possibly more severe impacts because of issues outside of our control.

We also appreciate that your job is to establish policy statewide, and this bill delivers a localized investment.

However, we want to be a partner as a sovereign government committed to this region as the first occupants of this land to support a solution that provides broad community benefit – AND contributes to the comprehensive efforts to evaluate and prioritize where state resources make the most significant impact statewide.

ODFW is here to speak to what this bill would invest in from the state's perspective.

I am here to reinforce that we are equally committed to investments in sustainable and abundant fisheries and the conservation and recovery of native fish populations.

We believe this proposal helps relieve the burden on the state by moving some programs to the south Umpqua on tribal land that will continue propagation of South Umpqua hatchery programs, reduce stray rates of hatchery fish and ease the burden on other hatcheries within the southwest hatchery network.

Continuing the current programs with additional research and monitoring can provide more data to inform future hatchery management in the Umpqua and throughout the state hatchery network.

Please pass this bill with a full endorsement to allow this discussion and potential partnership to continue.

We have a unique opportunity to set a foundation for future government-to-government partnerships across many policies that impact us all – for the benefit of all Oregonians.

Thank you.