

March 28, 2025

Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Nash, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Thomas MacDonald. I am the owner of Desert Springs Trout Farm in Summer Lake, Oregon and I wish to testify in opposition to SB 512.

I believe it is high time to explore what private enterprise can contribute to Oregon's fisheries rather than continuing down a path of ever-increasing state hatchery taxpayer funding with diminishing returns. I have been operating a successful aquaculture business in Summer Lake for 32 years, producing around a half-million pounds of high-quality rainbow trout annually and have also raised hundreds of thousands of pounds of coho salmon at my facility. For more than a decade we have been the predominant supplier of trophy size trout ranging from 2 to 10 pounds each to the Eastern Sierra region of California, stocking dozens of lakes and streams for Mono and Inyo Counties and the Town of Mammoth Lakes. These fish help to draw thousands of visitors to the area and provide enormous economic benefit.

I understand that there are arguments both for and against hatchery steelhead in the Umpqua River. However, I'm confident that my company could either be an integral part of sustaining this fishery or enhancing sportfishing statewide at a fraction of the current cost to taxpayers. I feel that my operation, with its artesian water of optimal temperature and purity as well as its long track record (35+ years) of raising disease-free fish has been too long overlooked as a viable part of the equation for Oregon.

Thomas MacDonald  
Summer Lake, OR