



Chair Frederick, Chair Levy and Committee members,

The Oregon Chapter of the Coastal Conservation Association offers the following comments on HB 5009, which appropriates funding for the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

At this point in the legislative process CCA Oregon is neutral on the proposed budget. We recognize the need and support adequate funding for ODFW especially at a time when costs are increasing. The main reason for our neutrality is because there are several key funding and legislative decisions yet to be made.

CCA Oregon encourages increased funding for our hatcheries. Over 70% of the salmon and steelhead harvested in Oregon begin the lives in a hatchery and 90% of the trout caught and kept throughout the state come from our hatcheries. CCA Oregon offered its support for HB 2345, which would redirect an existing license surcharge to create a Hatchery Monitoring and Maintenance Fund. The bill is estimated to generate about \$1.1 million per biennium for critical monitoring and maintenance activities for our hatcheries.

SB 5505 finances capital improvement and public construction projects across Oregon. The bill includes \$20.2 million for ODFW to begin addressing its deferred hatchery maintenance backlog estimated to be at least \$200 million. CCA Oregon strongly supports this funding and is urging the Legislature to increase the amount to \$40 million given the immense funding need. Hatcheries help mitigate for the impacts of development across Oregon and all Oregonians have a responsibility to help maintain ODFW's hatcheries.

If passed SB 512 would provide direction and \$1.4 million for important studies in the Umpqua basin. CCA Oregon supports SB 512 and all other efforts to rebuild a year around facility at the Rock Creek hatchery site.

Recreational anglers have made, and anticipate continuing to make, investments to help protect ESA listed salmon and steelhead in the Columbia River. CCA Oregon intends on supporting HB 2343 which would extend the Columbia River Endorsement for an additional

six-years. The endorsement has played a key role in funding additional off-channel chinook releases for commercial harvest.

CCA Oregon is concerned with the lack of an increase in General Fund dollars included in the proposed budget. House Bill 5009 would provide ODFW about \$66 million in General Fund revenue – just 10% of ODFW’s overall \$665 million biennial budget. This is basically unchanged from the level of General Fund the agency received in 2023-2025 – despite the significant cost increases felt by the agency.

HB 2342 (fee increase bill) is being promoted to cover the agency’s escalating operational costs and would increase recreational fishing and hunting fees several times over the next six years. Fishing license fees would increase by 14% in 2026 and another 6% in both 2028 and 2030. The bill would generate about \$17 million in increased recreational fishing license revenue in the 2025-2027 biennium and \$30 million in the 2027-2029 biennium.

CCA Oregon has supported tax proposals to create a dedicated, broad based funding source for ODFW (HB 2977 and HB 3856). However, if these proposals don’t advance, the Legislature should provide ODFW an additional \$9 million in General Fund — which is a 14% increase over its current level. This is the same percentage increase being sought from recreational license buyers. It is only fair that the state matches the increase being asked of recreational license buyers since all Oregonians benefit from ODFW. This increased funding would allow ODFW to reverse reductions, make additional conservation investments, and enhance recreational opportunities

Allocating and paying for ODFW’s budget is complex with many variables. Recreational anglers have signaled support for and a willingness to help fund increases in the agency’s budget. That willingness is tempered by an apparent lack of increased statewide funding. CCA Oregon encourages the Legislature to seriously consider increasing statewide funding for ODFW to better reflect the broad-based benefits the agency provides.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on House Bill 5009 – as outlined it is just one part of an interdependent package of legislative decisions and changes needed to help ensure a sustainable future for Oregon’s fisheries.

Respectfully,

Dave Schamp

Chairman, CCA Oregon