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On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On
Capital Construction

Measure, Appointment or SB5505
Topic:

When I met my (now) husband in 2010, we were young college students short on spending money. Most of my memories from our first several years of dating are on the river. A cheap date with plenty of adventure. I didn't know much about fishing, but he taught me all I needed to know. I vividly remember sitting on the banks of the McKenzie River watching schools (often 3-5 at a time) of steelhead swim by. I wish I knew then that those days were numbered. I didn't realize how good we had it. We'd catch our limit often and enjoy filets for dinner.

More than a decade later, our favorite fishing holes are sparse with fish. Those runs are no longer consistent. The absence of healthy hatchery steelhead runs makes it too great of a time sink (for likely no fish) that most people can't afford. We now have two boys of our own who love to fish. If only we could share those fish runs with them that we enjoyed years ago. At ages 4 and 7, their attention spans are short. With low fish counts, we've never even taken them to those honey holes we once frequented. Just imagine the smiles they'd have if they could hook onto their first steelhead, hear that line run, and see it jump!

While hatchery programs have their fair share of politics surrounding them—healthy hatchery runs provide an opportunity for many people to put food on the table and grow an appreciation for our rivers that they may never gain any another way. And without that appreciation, they likely won't know how important it is to protect our rivers. Healthy hatchery runs enjoyed by many, including my kids, will foster the next conservation minded generation.

Please fund these hatcheries. Our rivers depend on it.