



Senator Jeff Golden, Chair  
Senator Todd Nash, Vice-Chair  
Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire

April 16, 2025

**RE: Support for base bill, HB 2345, renaming the Oregon Hatchery Research Center Fund and investing in critical monitoring and maintenance needs**

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

I am writing to express Wild Salmon Centers' (WSC) support for the base bill of HB 2345, which repurposes an Oregon angling surcharge to fund hatchery maintenance and monitoring—two of Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's (ODFW) top fisheries management priorities. **HB 2345 passed out of the House with bipartisan support and we urge the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire to pass the base bill without additional amendments.**

WSC focuses on protecting and conserving salmon strongholds on the Oregon Coast, where wild salmon populations are strong and diverse and where habitats are highly functioning and intact. Where investments in hatchery management are made, they must be grounded in science, aligned with assessments completed during the ODFW hatchery resilience process, supportive of Tribal and cultural values, consistent with the Coastal Multi-species Conservation Management Plan, and representative of a strategic investment for Oregonians.

HB 2345 provides funding to support monitoring programs that provide essential data for the future management of wild and hatchery salmon and steelhead. It also provides funding directly for hatchery maintenance, which will be critical to address the \$220 million of deferred maintenance needs at state hatchery facilities.<sup>1</sup> The challenges to hatchery facilities as a result of this maintenance backlog are further exacerbated by declining water quality, reduced stream flows, and increased risks due to wildfires.

**HB 2345 allocates critical resources to ODFW priorities for monitoring and hatchery maintenance.**

The proposed bill would allocate \$600,000 in funding each biennium to address over \$220 million in deferred maintenance at Oregon state hatcheries. Over the past 50 years, little to no funding has been directed toward maintenance at hatchery facilities, and budget cuts hinder ODFW's ability to maintain these facilities. Additionally, another \$600,000 in funding would be directed to monitoring hatchery and wild fish on the Oregon Coast. The Governor's Recommended Budget (GRB) cuts more than \$1 million to ODFW's monitoring programs. This monitoring is critical for fisheries managers to assess the long-term impacts of harvest fisheries,

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<sup>1</sup> Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, "Oregon's hatcheries: charting a sustainable future," Available online < <https://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/hatchery/resilience.asp> >.

hatchery programs, and potential habitat destruction. Reallocating the angling license surcharge to hatchery maintenance and monitoring addresses two priorities for ODFW as an agency.

The -1 amendment proposed would eliminate the monitoring funds and reallocate that \$600,000 to start a Chum Salmon hatchery program on the Coos and Coquille Rivers, an effort that conflicts with ODFW's conservation management plan for the Oregon Coast. The -2 and -3 amendments proposed would redirect funding for research, which is already occurring at Oregon State University under alternative funding sources. The base bill prioritizes funding for the most critical needs to monitor fisheries and address the significant backlog of deferred hatchery maintenance.

**WSC asks the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire to move the base bill, HB 2345, forward without amendments.** We recognize the complexities of hatchery management issues and want to be a part of a creative, collaborative solution supporting wild fish. This bill supports the state's hatchery infrastructure and provides funding for ODFW to address two of its top priorities on the Oregon Coast - monitoring and hatchery maintenance.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,  
Kirk Blaine  
Sr. Wild Fish Program Manager

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