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On Behalf Of:

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Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB221

I grew up in Coos Bay and fishing the Millicoma forks and Coos river was, and is, one of my favorite past times. I'm currently a practicing dentist located in Newberg.

In my profession I learn from failure, because I have to. I have over 10 years of experience and have seen what works, and what doesn't work. What works is understanding why the problems are happening, and helping my patient make fundamental changes to prevent the problems in the future. If someone needs extensive dental work it's likely because they haven't taken care of their teeth. I can fix their teeth, but if they don't make changes to how they take care of their teeth, there won't be a good long term result.

I bring up my career experiences because I see the same mentalities prevalent in salmon conservation. We know some of the causes of salmon decline, but too often there isn't a comprehensive plan to make fundamental changes necessary for long term success.

To give an example of what I'm talking about, please let me refer to my experiences floating the East Fork of the Millicoma river. Salmon need clean water and gravel to spawn. There are currently, as I type, miles of blackberry brambles lining the banks of the East Fork Millicoma. Why does that matter? Blackberry is invasive and does not have a root system which holds soil in place. The result is countless areas where the bank is eroding into the river, increasing sedimentation which covers important spawning gravel and inhibits successful spawning. Salmon evolved with a diverse array of trees and shrubs which both stabilized the bank and provided shade to cool the water. When I reached out the Coos Bay soil and water district they acknowledged this was a big problem. Along with the blackberries there are also multiple garbage heaps right along the river bank. Where is local advocacy for these issues?

What works is a comprehensive approach that addresses the known causes of salmon decline. Some of the tribes have done great work with salmon restoration. Some tribes in Washington litigated to make countless culverts more fish friendly. Some tribes have habitat restoration gatherings. In various places throughout the Pacific Northwest some tribes are big advocates for dam removal. Some tribes run water quality testing programs. The list goes on. They are often multi-faceted advocates as opposed to ignoring the problems and simply advocating for more hatchery fish. These are the things we need to emphasize and focus on. A thoughtful

hatchery program which operates on the best available science is a great tool when it's used in combination with practices that address the fundamental problems salmon face.

To address hatchboxes more specifically, ODFW's own documents say hatchboxes have limited if any effect on salmon population or actual harvest. This information can be found on the web. As we try to make government spending more efficient, why would we route valuable resources to something which clearly doesn't work?

When used correctly, hatchery fish can be an effective tool to rebuild runs, or supplement runs for harvest. Hatchbox programs on their own are meaningless because they distract us from the real problems and are part a mentality that refuses to learn from past failures.

Our modern relationship with salmon is typically one sided. We take, but we don't give back. I don't know many successful relationships built on that foundation. What Salmon need now is a reciprocal relationship with us. A relationship that is built not just on us taking and harvesting, but also built on us listening to the Salmons problems and giving back to them, so they can thrive going into the future. When I look at the poor state of the East Fork Millicoma river I'm reminded, again, that we have not learned from past failures.