



American Fisheries Society Oregon Chapter

OR Chapter AFS: PO Box 8062 Portland, OR 97207-8062 www.orafs.org

Date: April 20, 2025

RE: OREGON CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY OPPOSES SB 221 RELATING TO A HATCHBOX PROGRAM IN COOS COUNTY.

Co-Chairs Rep. Helm and Owens and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water

The Oregon Chapter of the American Fisheries Society (ORAFS) comprises over 275 fisheries and aquatics science professionals from federal, state, and tribal agencies, colleges and universities, diverse private employers, college students, and retirees. ORAFS was established in 1964 as a chapter of the American Fisheries Society. Our mission is to improve the conservation and sustainability of Oregon fishery resources and their aquatic ecosystems for long-term public benefit by advancing science, education and public discourse concerning fisheries and aquatic science and by promoting the development of fisheries professionals.

ORAFS does not support SB 221 as written because the bill does not acknowledge existing fall Chinook salmon artificial supplementation programs managed by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and the Coquille Indian Tribe (CIT), and the bill lacks provisions to minimize risks to Coos Bay salmonid populations and existing management programs. Although “fish incubation devices”, which we interpret to be egg incubation boxes or hatchboxes, have shown success in re-establishing salmon populations, care must be taken when choosing broodstock, hatchbox locations, and hatchbox structure. Hatchery-origin (HOR) juvenile fall Chinook salmon production should also be monitored to assess potential effects on natural-origin (NOR) juvenile fish and determine HOR and NOR returns in monitored streams.

Therefore, ORAFS members propose these amendments to SB 221.

1. **Require ODFW program oversight.** SB 221 proposes a hatchbox program operated by private entities. ORAFS can only support this program if ODFW has discretionary oversight of when, where, and how the hatchboxes are established. Hatchbox programs can be successful but only in a narrow set of circumstances. An extensive knowledge of the watershed, combined with the best available science, must be used to determine where and when to use hatchboxes.
2. **Require program monitoring and annual reporting.** Any private entity that undertakes a hatchbox program must provide ODFW with an annual report. Annual reports should include broodstock origin and the number of eggs used, the design and location of placed hatchboxes, any losses to eggs and fry with an explanation of the most likely cause of the loss, and the number of adult returns to the stream.
3. **Programs must comply with current policies.** The hatchbox programs must follow ODFW’s Native Fish Conservation Policy, Coastal Multi-Species Conservation and Management Plan, and Hatchery Genetic Management Plans for Fall Chinook Salmon.

Although we recognize the benefits of promoting citizen interest in improving Oregon’s fisheries and aquatic resources and increasing angling opportunities, we encourage the Legislature to support investment in programs that will result in meaningful ecological improvement in Coos County fisheries. Thank you for the opportunity to submit our recommendations to amend SB 221.

Respectfully,

Troy Brandt – ORAFS, Legislative Committee Chair, 503-307-8367, tbrandt415@gmail.com