

Submitter: Roger Fletcher
On Behalf Of: McKenzie River Discovery Center
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Capital Construction
Measure, Appointment or SB5701
Topic:

Co-Chairs and Members if the Committee:

I serve on the board of the McKenzie River Discovery Center, where my work has focused on the history of the iconic McKenzie River drift boat. Through collaboration with hydrologists studying the High Cascades aquifer, fisheries biologists protecting threatened spring Chinook and bull trout, and fire ecologists assessing post-Holiday Farm Fire recovery, I have come to see how rare—and fragile yet resilient—this river truly is.

I have also learned that its cultural story reaches back thousands of years before drift boats and hatcheries. With guidance from Tribal historian Dr. David Lewis and Tribal partners, MRDC is ensuring Indigenous lifeways are represented with accuracy, dignity, and voice.

In partnership with the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI), these stories will be experienced through hands-on exhibits connecting water, salmon, fire, and culture.

MRDC is shovel-ready and already operating programs. Designed to attract up to 50,000 visitors annually, it is projected to generate approximately \$7 million per year in regional economic activity—supporting wildfire recovery and strengthening the McKenzie Valley economy.

The requested \$4.8 million will complete restoration and exhibit fabrication at the historic hatchery site.

This is an investment in stewardship, recovery, and Oregon's shared legacy.

I strongly urge your support.