



PAUL R. HOLVEY
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 8

OREGON HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

March 21, 2013

Chair Brad Witt and Members of the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee
RE: HB 2530 – Protecting Oregon's Pacific Salmon & HB 3177 – GE Fish Labeling

Thank you for scheduling a public hearing on HB 2530 & HB 3177. The purpose of HB 2530 is to protect our wild stocks of Pacific salmon. The farming of Atlantic or genetically engineered salmon poses a serious threat to our Pacific salmon. The potential for escapement would put this invasive species in competition for food and space. What is particularly alarming is that genetically engineered salmon would be difficult and perhaps even impossible to eradicate (similar to invasive species) because genetically engineered organisms are modified to enable them to withstand wider ranges of disease, salinity and temperature.

They also could breed with wild stock, spreading undesirable genes and diluting the genetic makeup of our wild stock. Genetically engineered salmon can also grow more than seven times larger than native counterparts, raising concerns that the supersized fish would outcompete wild salmon if they were released or escaped into open streams and waterways. Farmed fish are also vectors for disease, which jeopardizes the survival of our wild salmon stock, their habitat, the food sources and the economy they represent.

HB 3177 is necessary because consumers purchase salmon because it is widely recognized for its health benefits. Allowing a company to sell a genetically engineered product could undermine consumer confidence in all salmon products as well as the health benefits of salmon consumption in general. We need to make sure Oregon salmon continues to be recognized as a healthy food source that is clearly recognizable and distinguished at the point of sale from a genetically engineered version.

Allowing genetically engineered fish in Oregon without proper labeling could seriously jeopardize Oregon's salmon fishing industry. Genetically engineered salmon could erode the strength of our seafood industry, especially if appropriate labeling is not mandated. For Oregon, the results could be devastating to both the salmon industry and the state's economy. Farmed salmon has already threatened the position of Oregon's wild salmon in the seafood market. Despite the investment in marketing focused on distinguishing the health benefits of wild salmon, studies still show consumers struggle to distinguish seafood in the marketplace. Adding genetically engineered salmon to the store shelf could further complicate the efforts of consumers seeking healthy, wild seafood products.

We need to proactively take action to protect our Pacific salmon from the farming and sale of genetically engineered salmon. HB 2530 protects the future of Pacific Salmon in Oregon by mitigating harm to our natural stocks and HB 3177 is important to maintaining consumer confidence in the future of Oregon's salmon and our fishing industry. I urge your support and passage of HB 2530 & HB 3177.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,
Paul Holvey

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HB 2530: Protecting Oregon's Pacific Salmon

Background:

Threat to the Health of Native Fish Stocks

The farming of Atlantic or genetically engineered salmon poses a serious threat to our Pacific salmon. The potential for escapement would put this invasive species in competition for food and space. They also could breed with wild stock, spreading undesirable genes and diluting the genetic makeup of our wild stock. Genetically engineered salmon can also grow more than seven times larger than native counterparts, raising concerns that the supersized fish would outcompete wild salmon if they were released or escaped into open streams and waterways. Farmed fish are also vectors for disease, which jeopardizes the survival of our wild salmon stock, their habitat, the food sources and the economy they represent. What is particularly alarming is that genetically engineered salmon would be difficult and perhaps even impossible to eradicate (similar to invasive species) because genetically engineered organisms are modified to enable them to withstand wider ranges of disease, salinity and temperature.

Jeopardizing Consumer Confidence in Salmon

Salmon is widely recognized for its health benefits and many consumers purchase salmon for this reason. Allowing a company to sell a genetically engineered product that has not been subject to sufficient long-term testing would undermine consumer confidence in all salmon products as well as the health benefits of salmon consumption in general. We need to make sure Oregon salmon continues to be recognized as a native species to the Pacific and a healthy food source.

Economic Impact on Wild Seafood Industry

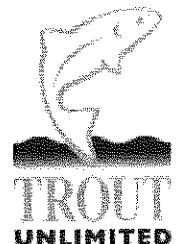
Allowing genetically engineered fish and Atlantic salmon in Oregon could seriously jeopardize Oregon's salmon fishing industry. Genetically engineered salmon could erode the strength of our seafood industry, especially if appropriate labeling is not mandated. For Oregon, the results could be devastating to both the salmon industry and the state's economy. Farmed salmon has already threatened the position of Oregon's wild salmon in the seafood market. Despite the investment in marketing focused on distinguishing the health benefits of wild salmon, studies still show consumers struggle to distinguish seafood in the marketplace. Adding genetically engineered salmon to the store shelf could further complicate the efforts of consumers seeking healthy, wild seafood products.

Solution/Implementation:

We need to proactively take action to protect our Pacific salmon from the farming of genetically engineered and Atlantic salmon. HB 2530 protects our native species by prohibiting importation, cultivation, growth and release of genetically engineered or Atlantic salmon in Oregon's waters.

Supported By:

- Oregon Salmon Commission
- Association of Northwest Steelheaders
- Native Fish Society
- Trout Unlimited
- Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon
- Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Community of Oregon
- Tualatin Riverkeepers



Sponsored By:

- Representative Paul Holvey and Representative Deborah Boone