



**Testimony in Opposition to HB 3437**  
**WaterWatch of Oregon**  
**April 3, 2013**

Founded in 1985, WaterWatch is a non-profit river conservation group dedicated to the protection and restoration of natural flows in Oregon's rivers. WaterWatch works to ensure that enough water is protected in Oregon's rivers to sustain fish, wildlife, recreation and other public uses of Oregon's rivers, lakes and streams. We also work for balanced water laws and policies. WaterWatch has members across Oregon who care deeply about our rivers, their inhabitants and the effects of water laws and policies on these resources.

The fish and wildlife resources of Oregon belong to all Oregonians, not just to the small segment of the population who happen to enjoy utilizing those resources. This public ownership of wildlife resources is reflected in the existing charge to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission expressed in ORS 496.090 (1) (6)"

"All members of the commission shall represent the public interest of the state and make decisions affecting the wildlife resources of the state for the benefit of those resources."

To require all members of the commission to be licensed users of wildlife resources for 10 consecutive years prior to appointment, as HB 3437 does, would disenfranchise the substantial fraction of the state's population that does not fish, hunt (or harvest shellfish) but are also co-owners of Oregon's valuable wildlife heritage. Many forms of wildlife are valuable to Oregonians and the state's economy but do not involve licensed consumptive uses of wildlife. For example, in 2008, there were approximately 1,700,000 wildlife viewers in Oregon who took over 5.5 million bird watching trips in Oregon.<sup>1</sup>

The members of WaterWatch of Oregon, many of whom do enjoy utilizing Oregon's fish and wildlife resources, believe this bill is a bad idea. WaterWatch of Oregon strongly opposes this bill as drafted.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on HB 3437.

**Contact:** Jim Myron, Lobbyist, WaterWatch of Oregon 503.819.5589 myrons@canby.net

---

<sup>1</sup> Fishing, Hunting, Wildlife Viewing and Shellfishing in Oregon, 2008 State and County Expenditure Estimates. View the report and an interactive website at <http://www.dfw.state.or.us/agency/>