

April 10, 2013

Joint Ways and Means Natural Resources Subcommittee

Senator Chris Edwards, Co-Chair

Representative Ben Unger, Co-Chair

Senator Jackie Dingfelder

Senator Chuck Thomsen

Representative Jules Bailey

Representative Bruce Hanna

Dear Co-Chairs and Members of the Committee:

This letter is in support of HB 5013, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Proposed Budget.

With an education and career in natural resources, an active hunter education instructor since 1970 and a citizen who takes an interest in the agency and its future I find HB 5013 a carefully balanced proposal.

I find it well grounded in respect to the Governor's 10 Year Plan for Oregon. I see it being very strategic in addressing a broad array of key natural resource needs and priorities in the coming biennium and beyond, in seeking a sustainable path to the future.

Several observations I wish to share are as follows:

The need for balancing human growth and development in Oregon as it relates to protecting, managing and sustaining habitat and fish and wildlife populations continue to grow in complexity. This need places an increasing demand on a finite work force, independent of budget trends. My statement simply wishes to confirm this as a concern and a need.

The sale of hunting and fishing licenses has been a major element of funding. US Fish and Wildlife Service statistics reveal Oregon has experienced a significant reduction in participation in hunting and fishing since the 1980's, resulting in a significant reduction in this income stream. This trend is not unique to Oregon; rather, it is a national trend. It tells me fewer families chose to hunt and fish today. It matches my experience in the classroom and the communities I have lived in over the years. And I see the increasing trend for citizens in Oregon in non-consumptive outdoor activities such as viewing and photography and feeding wildlife.

At present, license revenues and related federal matching dollars still comprise better than 50% of the agency income stream. Without alternative funding, however, this trend will continue to severely limit

the ability of the agency in all ways, including public expectations for managing and protecting Oregon's fish and wildlife resources. I urge your support in alternative funding as a critical need.

And I urge thought and support in beginning to access new revenue streams from the non-consumptive aspect of wildlife users. Non-consumptive wildlife activities are a multibillion dollar industry within Oregon alone. And it affects job opportunities and businesses across Oregon. As a part of tourism, this is very important to the economies of rural communities across eastern Oregon, along with the recreation dollars generated from hunting and fishing.

As a small example, it is my hope a proposal to approve a tax on bird seed will be successful this legislative session and, while a small income stream, it can generate funds to assist in carrying out parts of the Oregon Conservation Strategy.

I also commend ODFW in its continued commitment and emphasis in education and public relations. In my 40 years of outdoor education, Oregon is unique in understanding of the importance of public awareness, education and information management and has done a commendable job in this regard. It is not uncommon to reduce funds in this area when budgets feel tight, later to find significant consequences by the public understanding less and less about natural resource management. I find Oregon at the top in its excellent hunting safety statistics, its outdoor clinics and youth hunting and fishing program opportunities, and in simply keeping the public informed. This has played a key role with the wolf issue, keeping the public in touch with the facts, here in Baker County. HB 5013 continues this emphasis.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

/S/ Richard Haines

Volunteer Hunter Education Instructor and Area Coordinator

Baker County Oregon