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OREGON SALMON COMMISSION

MEASURE: HB 2530
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HB 2530 Relating to Genetically Engineered/Modified Finfish

The Oregon Salmon Commission is an industry funded state commodity commission under the Oregon Department of Agriculture and represents the Oregon ocean commercial salmon fishermen. At a recent meeting, the Commission voted unanimously to write a letter to the FDA in opposition to any genetically modified salmon.

Therefore, the Oregon Salmon Commission supports HB 2530 which does not allow the import, transport or farming of any live genetically engineered finfish or any farming of Atlantic salmon in Oregon.

A major concern is escapement of either GM or Atlantic salmon into the natural river populations of salmon. This potential introduction of GM or Atlantic salmon could have disastrous affects or at least unknown consequences to those salmon already inhabiting the river systems. These potential interactions are unacceptable to the fisheries that depend on healthy systems of known populations of salmon.

According to the Center for Food Security and Public Health at Iowa State University, Infectious Salmon Anemia is a viral disease that has affected Atlantic salmon in fish farms in Canada, Norway, Scotland, and Chile. Although Pacific salmon currently show high relative resistance and no ISAV-related symptoms, there exists a potential for a viral adaptation to Pacific salmon. A farmed Pacific coho salmon in Chile was infected in 1999.

The Oregon Salmon Commission understands that the science for farming Atlantic salmon is variable, but the possibility of escapement or spread of disease is not an acceptable risk to our salmon populations and not a risk that we are willing to take.

We do ask that if the FDA does decide to proceed with GM salmon, that they be clearly labeled, so that the public can make their own decision about whether they wish to make this purchase. We do not want to have any confusion between Oregon caught salmon and GM farmed salmon. Some chain grocery stores have already decided not to carry GM salmon. I even had an email from a consumer saying that if GM salmon come to the marketplace and are not identified as such, then they will quit eating ALL salmon. I know that this is an extreme case, but if others think along these lines, then the effects could be disastrous to our commercial fishermen and coastal communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

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