

HB3441A

The Oregon Hatchery Research Center

HISTORY

Senator Roblan, Representative Witt, and Representative Krieger with 47 cosponsors, introduced HB 3441 in early March. This bill relates to the Oregon Hatchery Research Center (on the Alsea River). The bill will put into statute the makeup and duties of the OHRC board and the center.

The OHRC was established by the legislature in 2003. The cost of construction of the Center was nearly 10 million dollars, as is considered to be a “state of the art” hatchery research facility. The OHRC operation has been funded by over a million dollars per biennium of “Other Funds” which are largely commercial and recreational fishing license fees. The OHRC, in cooperation with the OSU Fisheries and Wildlife Department, has carried out scientifically valuable research. However, many fishermen and women would like to see the OHRC redirected to conduct research intended to minimize the risk to naturally produced fish by hatchery produced fish, while also maintaining the harvest of hatchery produced fish.

This bill has gone through three Legislative Council drafts and three amendments. Many people who represent a wide spectrum of interest (see attached list) in having the best possible quality hatchery research conducted by ODFW have contributed to writing HB 3441A.

CONTENT

The reconstituted OHRC Board would have 14 members appointed by the Director of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, any or all of which could be scientists. The ten voting members represent interests and industries whose lives and livelihoods are affected by the success of salmon recovery in Oregon and the northwest. The board will choose one of its members as the chair.

Section 3 of the bill defines the duties of the OHRC Board which include:

Establishing strategic direction for the OHRC consistent with ORS 496.275.”

ORS 496.275 states in part: *“The Legislative Assembly hereby declares the necessity to review all options and means for the protection and restoration of Oregon’s salmon resources that promote local economic development and enjoyment by all citizens of Oregon.”*

Participating in developing a biennial budget for the OHRC.

Developing requests for proposals and proposing research projects for the OHRC, as needed, to carry out the activities of the OHRC.

Reviewing, approving, and prioritizing research proposals for the OHRC.

Reporting annually to the Legislature and to the Fish and Wildlife Commission.

Section 5 of the bill establishes the activities of the OHRC; which include:

(a) Conduct research on methods to minimize the genetic and ecological risk to naturally produced fish when hatchery produced fish are released in the waters of this state, while also maintaining the consumptive harvest of hatchery produced fish.

(b) Conduct research to determine the genetic and ecological risk to naturally produced fish when wild broodstock hatchery produced fish are released into the waters of this state.

(c) Conduct research to determine the effect of hatchery operations on naturally produced fish and the habitat of naturally produced fish.

(d) Provide educational and research opportunities for undergraduate students, graduate students and postgraduate students.

(e) Provide educational opportunities for the public and for students in grades 1 through 12.

The bill directs the ODFW Director and the Chair of the OSU Fisheries and Wildlife Department to appoint the OHRC Director. The bill also directs the Department of Fish and Wildlife to renegotiate the agreement with the State Board of Higher Education (OSU) in order to carry out the activities in Section 5 of this bill. This will insure continuous operation of the OHRC and the ongoing research.

CONCLUSION

The commercial and recreation harvest of salmon and steelhead are an important part of the culture and economy of Oregon. A large portion of the salmon and steelhead harvested in Oregon are of hatchery origin. HB 3441A will insure that the OHRC continues its valuable research and provides recommendations to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission regarding hatchery operations.

If you have any questions about HB 3441A, please call my cell 503-559-7942 or e-mail me at joseph.rohleder@gmail.com

Thanks, Joe Rohleder

The following groups have an interest in salmon recovery in Oregon and helped develop and support HB 3441A.

Alsea Sportsmen Association
Association of Northwest Steelheaders
Carpenter's Industrial Council
McKenzie River Guides Association
Native Fish Society
Oregon Anglers Association
Oregon Chapter of the Coastal Conservation Association
Oregon Chapter of Trout Unlimited
Oregon Aggregate Producers Association
Oregon Coastal Ports Association
Oregon Farm Bureau
Oregon Outdoor Council
Oregon Salmon Commission
Oregonians for Food and Shelter
Salmon For All
Seafood Oregon
Small Woodlot Owners Association

Roy Elicker, Curt Melcher and Ed Bowles of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Dr. Dan Edge, chair of the OSU fisheries and wildlife department were consulted and given an opportunity to influence the development of HB 3441A.