



Oregon Council Trout Unlimited

March 4, 2015

Chair Witt and committee members-

I am here today to represent the 2700 members of Trout Unlimited in Oregon and the 150,000 members nationwide. Trout Unlimited is the largest cold water conservation group in the country whose mission is to protect, restore and reconnect cold-water habitat for native fish species.

I am here today for two purposes on HB 2808, 2997, and 2998. As someone who was born in Eastern Oregon and plans to retire there, I am deeply concerned about both the impact of the explosion of juniper on the Oregon high desert ecosystem and the lack of jobs for residents in many parts of Eastern Oregon. So I like the parts of these bills which deal with the overabundance of juniper and creating jobs using juniper as a valued wood source. I have always thought that instead of bulldozing or using juniper just as firewood, a market for juniper products could be created. Also, as a long time Oregonian, I have seen juniper numbers explode in eastern Oregon, having some negative impacts on the high desert ecosystem.

At the same time, the concerns that have been raised by conservationists about HB 2808 and some parts of the other bills are valid. Even though there numbers are up substantially, juniper is still a vital part of the ecosystem. Large old growth junipers, for example, are the only source of large woody debris along some eastern Oregon streams such as the Blitzen. Large woody debris is an important part of the stream ecosystem for spawning, rearing, protection and macro invertebrate production. ODFW, as well as other agencies need to be included in the management of the juniper. The concerns of Jim Myron, Amy Stuart, ONDA and others are valid and need to be addressed.

So in conclusion TU supports HB 2997 and 1198, with suggested amendments and that it is referred to Ways and Means. TU oppose HB 2808 for reasons already articulated by others. Let us continue to explore the use of harvested juniper as a potential job creator and scientifically managing juniper over abundance. But let ODFW, using its staff and core of science, along with help from other agencies, manage these trees and ecosystem..

For the future of the beautiful Oregon high desert ecosystem, we need to be careful, not neglecting the creation of jobs for this area but also not needlessly destroying this vital ecological region.

Tom Wolf, Executive Director

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