



Date: March 11, 2015
From: Audubon Society of Portland
To: House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources
Re: HB 3197

Dear Members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources,

Audubon Society of Portland would like to express its strong opposition to HB 3197. HB 3197 creates a special nominating committee which will forward a slate of candidate recommendations to the governor to fill vacant seats on the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Commission. The committee would be heavily weighted toward hunting and fishing interests with only a single seat reserved to represent conservation or the general public. This committee would replace the current system that is used for appointments to the ODFW Commission (as well as dozens of other state commissions) in which interested parties can file an interest form with the Governor's office or the governor can seek out candidates and encourage them to apply.

We believe that HB 3197 would add unnecessary layers of bureaucracy and expense to the selection of Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Commissioners while simultaneously reducing the transparency and accessibility of the process. It would give a narrow subset of special interests, focused primarily on hunting and game species, increased access and influence over the selection of ODFW Commissioners at the expense the representation of the broader public.

In our opinion, this legislation takes ODFW in the wrong direction. At a time when traditional hunting and fishing constituencies are declining and ODFW is facing significant funding shortfalls, the challenge before ODFW is to generate new and diversified revenue streams and connect with a much broader and more diverse audience beyond its traditional constituencies. This includes constituencies that are increasingly urban and constituencies interested in wildlife watching and conservation of nongame species. Ultimately the challenge is to institute programs that protect all of the the broad range of species native to Oregon, including the 88% of native species which are not hunted or fished.

It is critical that the ODFW Commission represent the broad range of interests concerned with protecting and preserving wildlife and wildlife habitat in Oregon. We believe that the existing nominating process has worked well and there is no reason to replace it with a new system that will be more bureaucratic, less accessible and give special standing to a narrow range of special interests. We urge you to vote no on HB 3197.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Sallinger". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bob Sallinger
Conservation Director
Audubon Society of Portland