



PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

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Land of Cheese, Trees and Ocean Breeze

March 30, 2015

To: Co-Chairs Devlin, Rayfield and Members of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources

From: Liane Welch, P.E., Director of Public Works

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Liane Welch".

Subject: OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE (ODFW) BUDGET CUTS

Dear Legislators:

Tillamook County Public Works has over 3,300 culverts and 600 miles of roadside ditches in our transportation system. We have partnered with many organizations to upgrade failing culverts with fish passage structures as required by law. One of our very active partners on most all of the newly designed and constructed fish passage structures is the ODFW. They assist with **permits, grant writing, fish salvage, inspection, and monitoring** of these projects.

The Habitat Conservation Biologist is responsible for reviewing permit applications for fill/removal and other non-culvert projects that impact our waterways including DSL permit applications for bridge work, emergency and non-emergency streambank repairs, and other types of activities surrounding our waterways.

In addition, we have beaver activity in roadside ditches and culverts, plugging and often causing water to flow where it can damage property. ODFW staff has been available to assist in decision making on how to handle these **beaver activities**.

We also get assistance from ODFW staff regarding the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). We often have to cut trees that are a danger to the traveling public and for capital projects. They guide us on the rules and identification of bird nesting tree habitat for us to comply with these federal laws.

The local ODFW office in Tillamook is planned to reduce its staff by 4.5 FTE's;

- Watershed council coordinator
- Habitat conservation biologist
- 1.5 Assistant District fish biologist
- Western Oregon stream restoration coordinator

Tillamook County Public Works lacks in-house resources to conduct assessments on environmental issues and threatened and endangered species and relies heavily on our local ODFW staff. This is a significant impact to our small community, as a reduction of 4.5 FTE's impacts our economy and the ability to get work accomplished in a timely manner. We understand the complexity and requirements for the State of Oregon to balance the budget. We appreciate the opportunity to provide these comments to you.