



March 29

Trout Unlimited testimony in opposition to HB 3240 and HB 3444

Chair Clem and Committee members-

I am here today representing the 2800 members of Trout Unlimited in Oregon. Trout Unlimited is the largest coldwater conservation group in the nation, with the mission of restoring and protecting watersheds and the cold water salmonid populations which dwell in them.

Trout Unlimited feels that HB 3240 and HB 3444 are wrong, just to be blunt. I will not argue some of the reasons we oppose these bills but want to look at this from a pragmatic point of view. The federal lands in Oregon whether they be BLM, US Forest Service or National Parks land are a place where hundreds of thousands of Oregonians, recreate-whether it be hunting, boating, fishing, hiking, backpacking, bird watching or camping. On these federal lands millions of dollars come into the local rural economies by people choosing to recreate.

To transfer these lands into the hands of the state of Oregon would require a tremendous upgrade in staffing for whatever agency they would end up in. The federal agencies charged with maintain these lands currently, BLM or USFS, have large numbers of staff who maintain recreational; opportunities for Oregonians and also have staff biologists and scientists who work on maintaining and restoring the health of the ecosystems.

If these lands were transferred to the state, there would have to be a tremendous increase in staffing requirements for Oregon Department of Forestry, Department of State lands or Department of Fish and Wildlife-whatever agency or combination of agencies would take responsibility. I just don't see the capacity for our state agencies to do so. Also, I don't see the availability of general fund money to cover the creation of new positions for this.

So just on the pressure this will put on state agencies and the immense economic costs, both HB 3240 and HB 3444 are bad ideas which should be opposed. Trout Unlimited urges your "No" vote on these bills.

Sincerely,

Tom Wolf,

Executive Director

Oregon Council Trout Unlimited