



April 3, 2015

Trout Unlimited opposes SB 803

Chair Edwards and Committee members-

I am here representing the 2800 members of Trout unlimited here in Oregon, part of the largest cold water conservation group in the nation. Our members are dedicating to restoring and protecting wild native salmonids and their habitat.

Trout Unlimited opposes SB 803 because it asks for general fund money from the proposed ODFW budget outside the External Budget Advisory Committee process. For several months, representatives from over 40 stakeholder groups worked with ODFW staff to put together a fair and comprehensive proposed agency budget for 2015-2017. We worked to get a budget that had general agreement from stakeholder groups and after a long contentious process, we arrived at a mutually agreeable proposal. This proposed budget was sent to the Governor and emerged as the 2015 Governor's proposed budget which just had a hearing in the Ways and Means Natural Resources sub-committee. It will be discussed more there before it goes to the full Ways and Means committee for approval, and then onto the Oregon Legislature for final approval.

SB 803 tries to side step this EBAC/ODFW process and get General Fund money for hatchery operations on the Oregon coast without being part of budget process. This is the wrong way to get money for this hatchery. TU recognizes the sincerity of the proponents of the bill but this is the wrong way to acquire these funds.

Trout Unlimited does not opposed the proposed hatchery program in SB 803 but rather their request for General Funds. If the proponents of the bill could obtain money for the hatchery operation outside state general funds or other state money, TU would not oppose it.

But in it's current form, Trout Unlimited just cannot support SB 803. Please vote "No" on this bill as it side steps an ODFW budget process which got maximum input from multiple stakeholder groups. This is not fair to all the groups who worked on the proposed 2015-17 budget and this bill should not go forward.

Sincerely

Tom Wolf, Executive Director

Oregon Council Trout Unlimited