



Oregon Council Trout Unlimited

April 6, 2015

Trout Unlimited supports HB 3459-with amendment suggestions

Chair Witt and Committee members-

I am here to testify on behalf of the Oregon members of Trout Unlimited, the nation's largest cold water conservation organization, composed of angler volunteers dedicated to restoring native trout and salmon populations and protecting/restoring their watershed habitat.

Trout Unlimited supports HB 3459, which contains some very good concepts such as creating more Free Fishing Days and setting up the Oregon Outdoor Activities Investment Planning Task Force. The concept of the Task Force, looking at recreational opportunities in the future, should be explored.

Trout Unlimited does have a question about the establishment of the Oregon Fishing Experience Enhancement Subaccount. This subaccount appears a little unwieldy and redundant. Before this part of the bill is passed into law, I suggest that bill sponsors work with ODFW to see about how the goals of this Section 2 in the bill can be established in ODFW budget without setting up a new separate sub-account.

We also have concerns about the number of free fishing days proposed. 12 is way too many and could take away money from regular license fees purchased. Trout Unlimited suggests that you drop the number of free fishing days down to 4. This number would provide opportunities for people to experience free fishing days but without costing ODFW needed fishing license money for their budget.

Another concern we have is the number of people on the proposed OOAIP Task Force. I think you need more representation from the fishing/hunting/recreational user groups and less government representation. Without input from representatives of stakeholder groups, I don't believe Task Force will meet its goals and thus harm the intent of HB 3459.

One last suggestion is that you work closely with ODFW on this concept and bill. It is important to get the agency's input and support.

So in conclusion, Trout Unlimited applauds and supports the concepts of HB 3459. We hope that our concerns and suggestions are given serious consideration to improve this bill. We appreciate the sincerity of the bill's sponsors and look forward to helping with the bill's concept, but encourage proponents to seek out ODFW's involvement.

Sincerely,

Tom Wolf, Executive Director

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