



Oregon Council Trout Unlimited

May 11, 2015

Trout Unlimited testimony in support of SB 247

Co-chair Rayfield, Co-chair Devlin and committee members-

I am here to represent the Oregon members of Trout Unlimited in support of SB 247, the ODFW license fee increase.

Without the proposed 2015-2017 fishing and hunting license fee increase, ODFW will not be able to keep important staff positions or programs open. For this reason Trout Unlimited supports passing the whole proposed license fee increase to ensure the continuation of current staffing and programs.

If the concerns of the coastal communities and charter businesses are addressed, Trout Unlimited is fine with not raising the daily fishing and shellfish license fees. Trout Unlimited wants concerns raised by people who could be economically impacted by these license fee increases to have their concerns addressed, in order to pass SB 247 and get this needed license fee increase to help fund various ODFW programs.

Now as far as the proposed ODFW cut list if the license fee increase is not approved, Trout Unlimited would like to see funding for the following programs/staffing not be part of the proposed cuts..

Assistant District fish biologists- These are key positions needed to do the work needed in certain watersheds and districts. These are very important positions which should be maintained.

Hatchery Research Center staffing- The research done at the HRC is very important to work on how hatchery salmon interact with wild salmon. This also is a program that shouldn't be cut.

The Water program, doing important instream flow work, is another program which shouldn't be cut. Without this program, many key issues for fish in streams won't have the input of ODFW.

All ODFW field staff positions should be protected. They are key for ODFW to do the conservation work and meet concerns of stakeholders.

In closing, I think it is important that Trout Unlimited stresses that to be of maximum benefit to ODFW's budget, all of the proposed license fee increases should be passed. But Trout Unlimited is flexible and willing to work with the department and other stakeholders to correct any concerns which will allow the maximum amount of license fee increases to move forward.

Without the 2015-2017 proposed ODFW license fee increase, important programs will not be funded. We need to look at future funding of ODFW to see that future license fee increase is not in ODFW budget six years from now. But for this particular session and budget proposal, Trout Unlimited supports SB 247 and believes that it is necessary for key funding of the department during this budget cycle.

Sincerely,

Tom Wolf,

Executive Director

Oregon Council Trout Unlimited