

Tuesday, May 12, 2015

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

Regarding: ODFW Funding

Dear Honorable Co-Chairs of the Ways and Means Natural Resources Subcommittee:
Representative Dan Rayfield, Senator Richard Devlin, and Respected Members of the Subcommittee,

We would like to express our *strongest possible support* for the continued funding of the Oregon Hatchery Research Center.

We believe the center's research work is vital to the future of our amazing wild and hatchery salmon stocks in the state of Oregon, and the critical portion of our economy they represent for the people of Oregon. These fish speak not just to our economic needs as a state, they speak to our souls. They are as much a part of our spectacular heritage as Crater Lake, the Eagle Cap Wilderness, and the Columbia River.

OHRC research funding is one of the best investments we make as a state, as it works to protect and support our treasured wild salmon stocks and secures our ability to provide hatchery fish for sport, commercial and tribal fisheries. The diverse multiple uses of these fish (ranging from sport angling to commercial fishing, passive viewing and tourism) are sometimes the most positive economy coastal to rural Oregonians enjoy during the year. From restaurants, lodging, tackle, gas, boats, clothing, gear and vehicles, a salmon dollar holds one of the greatest roll-out values in Oregon. According to Eco-Northwest, on the Rogue alone there are \$1.5 billion dollars annually associated with non-use salmon values in this river system (representing the majority of the economic value of Rogue River salmon). Multiply these salmon values across the width and breadth of our state from the Chetco to the Columbia River, and the positive economic impact of salmon value in Oregon is staggering. Our OHRC investment quite literally represents pennies to preserve billions.

OHRC's research also directly enables ODFW to comply with Oregon's Hatchery Management Policy and Native Fish Conservation Policy by assuring policy goals are met through:

1. Fostering and sustaining opportunities for sport, commercial and tribal fishers consistent with the conservation of naturally produced native fish.
2. Contributing toward the sustainability of naturally produced native fish populations through the responsible use of hatcheries and hatchery-produced fish.
3. Maintaining genetic resources of native fish populations spawned or reared in captivity.
4. Minimizing adverse ecological impacts to watersheds caused by hatchery facilities and operations.

Without the critical support of OHRC's fisheries science research, we will no longer be able to assure these policy goals are met, and we will then repeatedly fail in our defense of legal challenges to Oregon's hatchery system (which provides the overwhelming majority of landed salmon in our state). We need only look back less than a generation to remember how Oregon's once thriving and sustainable timber industry was destroyed by legal challenges because we failed to be at the forefront of spotted owl and marbled murrelett science. As a state, *we cannot afford to repeat that abject science failure again.*

When our legislature originally appropriated \$7 million dollars to establish OHRC, they did so because they felt it was the best investment they could make in the future of our fisheries. *None of that has changed.* Because of

your original OHRC investment, Oregon is now recognized as a world leader in salmonid science and OHRC attracts the finest anadromous scientists from around the world.

Through OHRC, our science, business, and tribal communities have come together with grass-roots citizen volunteers to detail dynamic research goals over the next decade (and beyond) that will protect our precious wild fish and continue our state's vital hatchery inputs. The visionary goals outlined in OHRC's research plan *provide an outstanding blueprint for ODFW as an agency*, as the approved research clearly details a *positive strategic plan* for the future of our salmon. Under the categories of ***Mate Selection, Differences caused by Hatchery Rearing, and Imprinting and Homing*** (please see the detail provided in our 2014 Annual Report and research plan), our research plan includes benchmarks, goals and deliverables for our resources, fisheries, and the people of Oregon. This is the vision Oregonians want as they look ahead to the world we are leaving our children and their children.

We fully understand the financial pressures ODFW faces, but OHRC represents the very best of their future as an agency, and much of our brightest future as a state. For the sake of all Oregonians and our state's magnificent salmon...OHRC *should never be included on any cut list*. It should instead be offered as a shining example of ODFW's vision for the future of our fish and wildlife resources. It should be *the foundation we use to help rebuild our agency and the public's trust in that agency*.

Our salmon are incredibly precious to Oregonians and the future of these fisheries command all the positive energy, dedication and deep commitment that OHRC provides. Please stand with us to preserve OHRC's remarkable vision, strategic research plan and its funding. We will not let you down, and we will not let the people of Oregon down. The grand lady that is the State of Oregon deserves no less.

All the best to each of you, with our deepest thanks for your dedication to our state, and for considering our thoughts,

(Signed as individuals)

Cam Parry
Board Chairman, OHRC

Lindsay Ball
Vice-Chairman, OHRC

Scott Starkey
Vice-Chair, OHRC