

Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources

Re: HB5511 and SB247

Senator Richard Devlin, Co-Chair

Representative Dan Rayfield, Co-Chair

May 13, 2015

My comments on ODFW's "cut list" dated 5-7-15.

The agency is facing a huge revenue shortfall during the 2015-17 biennium.

Causes include reduced recreational fishing license sales.

Only about a third of the residents who purchase an angling license also purchase a combined harvest card (salmon/steelhead/halibut tag). The other two thirds do not salmon fish but fish only for trout and warm water fish.

The ODFW May 7, 2015 cut list reduces trout production by closing the Alsea and Bandon hatcheries and eliminating the trout purchases from private hatcheries.

Closing the Alsea Hatchery will eliminate stocking trout in central coast lakes and ponds, reducing license sales further.

Closing the Alsea hatchery will also eliminate the hatchery steelhead program for the Alsea, Siletz, Yaquina and Siuslaw Rivers.

Fishing guides who now bring their clients to these coastal rivers during the winter and spring months will take their clients and the resulting economic activity elsewhere. Many clients will not fish for steelhead where there is no chance of taking a fish home.

Closing the Alsea Hatchery and the Oregon Hatchery Research Center will result in the loss of seven family wage jobs in the Alsea area. This will hurt the economy in this small town. Elimination of the Hatchery Steelhead program will reduce the number of guides and their clients passing through Alsea. Many guides currently stop in Alsea at the gas station, market and café. The loss of this business will further hurt the economy of Alsea.

Currently the department purchases \$400,000 of trout per biennium from private trout hatcheries. The bulk of these purchases are from Desert Springs Trout Farm which is the largest private hatchery in Oregon. DSTF sells trout to the state for under four dollars per pound delivered live to wherever the ODFW staff wants them planted. This is a discount from the price DSTF charges their other state and private customers. It is also less than ODFW can produce fish for in State hatcheries.

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DSTF is the greenest hatchery in the West. The water is a constant 60 degrees F, which is the optimum growth temperature for trout. The water comes from artesian wells and springs so there are no pumping costs. The hatchery uses no antibiotics or pesticides, and has developed a fish feed that contains no fin fish. The only shore power at the hatchery is a single 75 watt light bulb in the hatch house and an aerator in the pound holding the five to seven pound trout.

Contrast this with Rock Creek hatchery on the Umpqua which uses electric pumps to move water up the hill several hundred feet to the hatchery.

Or Leaburg Hatchery which uses ultra violet lights to sterilize the incoming water and so much formalin to protect the fish from diseases carried in the water that the outfall sometimes turns the McKenzie River a milky green color. Incidentally the hatchery is located upstream from the intake for the Eugene water supply.

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