

May 13th, 2015

Testimony

Oregon Legislature

Ways and Means Joint Budget Committee

The Charter Boat Industry is not arguing against most of the ODFW License Fee increases for resident Oregon hunters and fishermen. We are very concerned about the real possibility of heavy losses from our Out of State tourists to our fleets and to Oregon's Coastal economy. We fear that many of the out of state fishermen will simply go elsewhere, like California or Washington, to fish-you know-where their licenses fees are considerably less expensive and the bag limits are higher? With an economy that is far from being recovered , why would Oregon take that chance? Whether the ODFW intends to or not, they are taking money directly from us, and if not actually destroying our small businesses, they are, at the very least, making them less viable. One Charter Boat Captain commented that he had always been eager to help with the gathering of research data, often for free, but that this action could certainly dampen the spirit of co-operation with the ODFW in the future. He simply would not be able to afford these free trips any longer.

The new Ocean Endorsement Fee suggestion is even worse. Exactly what benefits are our customers supposed to receive from this added tax? Is this a fee that will also be imposed on beach users and hikers, bird watchers, swimmers, surfers, kayakers, etc? When did Oregon state agencies go from using tax and fee money to make something better for us and our visitors to just plain needing the money to support ever growing programs? When the Estuary and Wetland programs were established, we were promised that no fishermen's money would be used to support them, but at the Ways & Means hearing, we learned that the ODFW is supplying-and paying for-multiple Biologists for them. Sorry, but it is not fair to ask us to pay for them and other programs like this through ever increasing fee revenues. It is time for the NGO's to pay their own way.

We are successful small business owners. We have been for all of our adult lives. Please believe us when we say that these unreasonable out of state license fee increases will hurt our fishermen and our Coastal Communities .

Sincerely, Mick & Linda Buell,

Owners, CV Alaska Sunrise