

May 19, 2015

Senator Diane Rosenbaum, Chair &
Members of the Oregon State Senate Rules Committee

RE: The ODFW and the Bruce Buckmaster Appointment

Senator Rosenbaum and Members of the Committee,

Let us recount some history to see how we arrived at the present situation.

History – The Lower Columbia River salmon fishery is divided 40% gill nets and 60% for sport fishers. (Under the new plan this will revert to 70 % for sport fishers and 30% for gill netters.)

- The problem is that the gill nets are indiscriminate and kill many of the 13 ESEA endangered salmon and steelhead as bycatch from gill netting.

- Enter Measure 81 that would have banned gillnetting outright in the Oregon portion of the Columbia River. It was set to pass and polling indicated that it would pass. However, if the initiative would only apply to Oregon's portion of the Columbia River.

- Governor Kitzhaber then brokered a deal that would ban gill netting entirely on the main stem of the Columbia River in combination with the State of Washington if the Initiative Measure 81 was abandoned . This resulted in Senate Bill 830 during the 2013 Oregon legislature that codified the agreement.

- Salmon for All, the gill netters association, filed a law suit against the ODFW approval of the action (and the law) so a hearing was held in Tigard to be sure all the proper procedures were followed.

- Mr. Buckmaster presented testimony at the hearing. His comments are recorded in the minutes of that meeting. Among other things he said two things that are relevant to his nomination and stand out for me:

- 1) "I **morally** (my emphasis) cannot defend SB 830 as it now stands."
- 2) In fact he said that he is "**vehemently** (my emphasis) opposed to it."

Does it make sense to have someone who is a registered lobbyist and director of a group that opposes the Lower Columbia River agreements sit on the Commission that oversees the implementation of those reforms?

I would further argue that Mr. Buckmaster is an ideologue who will not and to quote him "morally" cannot become an impartial commissioner open to all ideas.

Currently, the ODFW Commission has one representative from the commercial fishing interests yet there is no one on the commission who has any expertise about the recreational fishing industry. ODFW sells over 600,000 sports fishing licenses.

This seems like some form of taxation without representation.

ODFW Budget

At present the hunting and fishing license fees fund about 1/3 of the ODFW budget so faced with declining license sales in their most recent budget, they propose to increase license fees and add new licenses and fees by 33 %.

The Columbia River surcharge (\$10 per year per angler) generates \$ 2.5 million dollars per year alone. In the new budget there is a 33% increase in license fees and a new license for ocean fishing (\$10 per year).

I have presented you with my ideas for increasing license sales in the past. The main point here is that the recreational sports fisherman is paying about 1/3 of the ODFW budget yet we have no representation on the Commission.

Given the dynamics of the situation, I think that appointment of Mr. Buckmaster will merely embroil the Commission in turmoil for the next four years of his appointment.

Therefore, I urge you to vote against the nomination of Mr. Buckmaster to become one of the new members of the ODFW Commission.

Sincerely yours,
Blaine Ackley

