



April 28, 2015

The Honorable Kate Brown  
Governor  
State of Oregon  
900 Court Street NE, 160  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Governor Brown,

Our organizations respectfully urge you to withdraw your recent appointment of Bruce Buckmaster to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission). While we don't question Mr. Buckmaster's knowledge and expertise in fish and wildlife issues, we do have serious concerns about his ability to effectively represent the public interest of the state as required by ORS 496.090(6), particularly on the highly-charged Columbia River fishery issues that dominate much of the Commission's time. There are legitimate questions about his ability to take an objective, open-minded approach to dealing with these issues and the recreational fishing community that represents a key constituency – and primary source of revenue – for the Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW).

For over a decade Mr. Buckmaster has been an effective advocate, spokesman, and lobbyist for the Columbia River commercial gillnet industry. A central figure in the long-running debate over Columbia River commercial gillnet harvest practices, Mr. Buckmaster's views on this issue are strongly felt and rooted in the years of acrimonious debate. In the years since the ESA listing of 13 species of Columbia River basin salmon and steelhead, Oregon and Washington have been transitioning away from the use of gillnets in mixed-stock, mainstem Columbia River fisheries. As you know, both states have adopted a comprehensive plan to accelerate this transition and improve the economic, social, and conservation benefits of Columbia River commercial and recreational fisheries. While work remains to ensure the plan is a success, Mr. Buckmaster and the industry association he helps guide have adamantly opposed, by every means available to them, the types of reforms adopted in the plan.

This appointment is already igniting a major controversy amongst the 11,000 individuals employed in the Sportfishing Industry, and their customers, the over 600,000 individuals who purchase the fishing licenses that fund ODFW's conservation and fishery management programs. In fact, recreational anglers generated over \$60 million in revenue during the current biennium. The new \$9.75 Columbia River basin recreational fishing surcharge is on track to generate \$2.5 million per biennium to fund the enhancement of Columbia River fisheries. This compares to about \$500,000 received from the commercial gillnet industry. As you know, ODFW has requested legislative approval of significant license fee increases on recreational anglers to shore up its budget. In our view the agency can ill-afford the controversy this appointment is creating in an already challenging environment related to its budget.

We believe it is in Oregon's best interest to have a Fish and Wildlife Commission comprised of a diverse group of qualified, open-minded individuals whose primary objective is to protect and enhance Oregon's fish and wildlife and their habitats for the use and enjoyment by present and future generations. The appointment of a lobbyist with a decade-long reputation for a single issue focus does not serve statewide interests and may only balkanize the Commission. We are also concerned about the effect this nomination will have on the balance of the Commission, which already includes one strong advocate from the commercial fishing industry. As you may know, the Commission lacks anyone with expertise in the recreational fishing industry.

We hope you will give serious consideration to this request. We look forward to continuing to work with you to do what's best for Oregon fish and wildlife.

Sincerely,

Dave Schamp, Chairman  
Coastal Conservation Association  
Oregon

Liz Hamilton, Executive Director  
Northwest Sportfishing Industry  
Association

Bob Rees, Executive Director  
Association of Northwest Steelheaders

Grant Putnam, President  
NW Guides & Anglers Association

Steve Mealey, President  
McKenzie River Guides Association

Cc: Members of the Oregon State Senate