



Oregon Council Trout Unlimited

May 26, 2015

Trout Unlimited supports HB 3315A

Chair Edwards and Committee members-

My name is Tom Wolf, Executive Director of the Oregon Council Trout Unlimited, here representing the 2700 members of Trout Unlimited here in Oregon. I am here today to voice TU's support of HB 3315.

In 2010, I was asked to speak before a group of 30 young college students from across the nation in a symposium put on the Bus Project in Portland. I was asked to speak on any subject that I considered the most important to the protection and restoration of watersheds. I chose, much to the surprise of the symposium's organizers, to speak on the funding of state natural resource agencies. I argued that state NR agencies were facing a major funding crisis in the future.

For example, the Oregon Department of Fish Wildlife is now facing a major deficit. The current major funding source of license fees has been going down for the last 30 years as fewer and fewer Oregonians are hunting and fishing. The numbers have stabilized in the last few years but still the agency cannot be funded in the way it used to be. With the major responsibility for providing services to hunters and anglers, ODFW also has a duty to conserve and protect Oregon wildlife for the 80% of Oregonians who don't hunt and fish. There are 2 ways this can be done, either by increasing General Fund monies given to the agency or coming up with creative ways to provide new funding for ODFW.

HB 3315A is a very good concept that would allow ODFW to charge for services they currently provide for free to other agencies. This would help bring in much needed funds into the department's coffers. In the declining funds environment we live in, and with the failure of other creative ideas of funding for ODFW, such as the wild bird seed fee, going nowhere, HB 3315A will provide needed funds for an agency responsible to our state citizens for the recovery and protection of native fish and wildlife.

I have been serving on the ODFW External Budget Advisory Committee ever since it was formed over 10 years ago. During that time, and the 23 years I have been working on natural resource issues in Oregon, I have seen the great work that ODFW staff has done in our state. The programs and people in ODFW are important for the protection and restoration of fish and wildlife species so they can be enjoyed by future Oregonians, whether they hunt and fish or just like to watch wildlife.

HB 3315A is an important tool to be used to fund ODFW in the future and Trout Unlimited urges that you vote “yes “on this bill and move it forward.

Tom Wolf, Executive Director

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