



Oregon Council Trout Unlimited

Trout Unlimited Support for HB 4046

Chair Witt and Committee members-

I am here today representing Trout Unlimited as the Executive Director of the Oregon Council Trout Unlimited. TU is the nation's largest cold water conservation group with 160,000 members nationwide and 3200 in Oregon. Trout Unlimited supports HB 4046 because we feel that this is a well written bill to take of serious illegal taking of fish and wildlife in Oregon.

First a story.

A few years ago I was on the boat of some friends of mine fishing for Spring chinook on the Willamette near Oregon City. Fishing was slow but we had brought a few fish in. At one point during the afternoon, I felt a fish take my bait and slowly move away. I noticed right away that this fish felt way to heavy and strong to be a chinook. And right at that moment, a 10-foot-long white sturgeon came barreling out of the water in a tremendous leap. Because sturgeon that size are spawners and can't be caught, I quickly broke it off. But frankly seeing a fish that big jump just 30 feet in front me was an amazing event in my 50+ years of angling, if only for a brief few seconds.

The current white sturgeon population in the Columbia River system is the largest in the world. But recently a terrible think is happening-there appears to be an organized effort to catch the large sturgeon and harvest just their eggs for caviar. Thus whereas the overall population of white sturgeon is doing well, the amount of spawning size sturgeon is going down. This is a serious problem which threatens the future of white sturgeon in the Columbia and it's tributary rivers.

HB 4046 addresses the harvest of sturgeon eggs and other key fish and wildlife violations and has large penalties for these violations. Trout Unlimited feels that HB 4046 is a great bill that we support and urge this committee to pass it. For the future of white sturgeon on the Columbia and other iconic wildlife in our state, HB 4046 is the right answer.

Tom Wolf,

Executive Director

Oregon Council Trout Unlimited