

Testimony before the Senate Committee on Health Care
February 23, 2016

Support for HB 4122A

Samantha Murray, Water Program Director

Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance innovative, collaborative solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) supports HB 4122A because we believe Oregon consumers deserve to be fully informed about the food they purchase and we support thriving local economies.

This past fall, the FDA approved the nation's first genetically engineered animal for consumption—a salmon that grows twice as fast as its natural counterpart. This fish was created in a laboratory using an Atlantic salmon, a growth hormone from a Chinook, and a gene from the ocean pout, an eel-like fish.

Although the fish is sterile and will be raised in landlocked facilities, future genetically modified fish may not be. With this door now open, genetically modified fish could pose a substantial risk to local fish populations by mating with or outcompeting native fish. This could also threaten the livelihood of commercial fishermen and coastal economies.

HB 4122A will help consumers avoid confusion and make purchasing decisions that comply with their values. As consumers are able to make informed choices and select non-GMO or local fish, labeling will also support a healthy Oregon economy.