



Oregon Council Trout Unlimited

Feb. 21, 2017

Trout Unlimited Testimony on ODA budget- SB 5502

Co-Chairs Senator Fredericks and Representative Witt and Committee-

My name is Tom Wolf, Executive Director, of the Oregon Council Trout Unlimited, here representing the 3200 members of TU in Oregon and our 155,000 member's nationwide. Our members are dedicated to protecting and restoring wild native trout and salmon plus their habitat. I am here today to talk about Trout Unlimited's concerns about the Oregon Department of Agriculture's 2017-2019 budget.

I will make my comments really brief. Trout Unlimited looks at the elimination of critical positions that will help ODA meet their conservation responsibilities. First, we asked that the lottery fund cuts which are being proposed -the \$354,000- to fund noxious weed and water quality programs- be kept. Both these areas provide key support for important issues in protection riparian areas and dealing with invasive weed species. To cut these programs could cause great ecological harm and economic hardship for rural communities.

Also, involving lottery funds, there would be a reduction of service for SWCD's. Making sure they have funds enough to do their mission is important- Trout Unlimited members helped the WA county SWCD pass a 2016 bond measure that will help them with funding but very few SWCD's have bonding funding and need to depend on grant money. Therefore, it is important that ODA provide those SWCD's with any funding possible as local SWCD's are an important arm of conservation.

Lastly, also involving lottery funds, there is a proposal to cut an Ag Water Quality Resource Specialist position. This is a key position to helping ODA carry out their conservation mission and should be kept. Also, Trout Unlimited wants ODA to have enough money to carry out all their conservation missions, as well as their general mission for protecting's Oregon's important Agriculture Community.

Trout Unlimited thanks this Committee for the chance to testify and hopes that the opinions expressed in our comments will register and cause some adjustments in ODA's 2017-2019 budget.