



S.T.E.P.

Gardiner-Reedsport-Winchester Bay
S.T.E.P.
P.O. Box 235
Reedsport, Oregon 97467
Telephone: 360-270-1686

Salmon Trout Enhancement Program

March 7, 2017

Oregon House Committee

Subject: House Bill 2902

To Whom It May Concern,

Recently House Bill 2902 has come to our attention because of the potential negative impact on economic development in our community.

Our non-profit (501 c 3) fall Chinook salmon hatchery relied on reservoir water for egg incubation until 2013, when the water conditions in the reservoir changed dramatically, killing off all 160,000 of our salmon eggs. It was a devastating event for our hatchery and could have resulted in our closure if it were not for the Port of Umpqua.

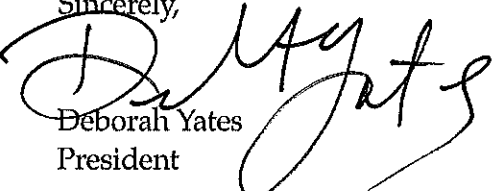
Our salmon hatchery is an economic driver in our community. The salmon raised in our hatchery return to the Lower Umpqua River basin three to six years after we released them into Winchester Bay. Attracting fishermen from around the world, it has been estimated that our fall Chinook salmon bring in well over a million dollars into the greater Reedsport area between Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends every year.

With our hatchery essentially out of business, we began looking around for water source alternatives. Fortunately, a high tech incubator came on the market which uses dechlorinated city water for egg incubation. Unfortunately, the cost of these incubators was cost prohibitive. We approached the Port of Umpqua for assistance. Understanding that their mission is to help provide an infrastructure for economic development, the board voted to give us \$10,000 towards the purchase of two Redd Zone Fog Incubators. When the Port of Umpqua invested their money in our fall Chinook hatchery it was for the economic development of the community, not an opportunity to open a salmon hatchery. They helped us get back on our feet, which allowed us to regain our economic relevance in our community.

The Port of Umpqua has been very supportive of area businesses by providing the necessary infrastructure to help them successfully operate in Gardiner, Reedsport and Winchester Bay. Through their help and support, businesses such as Fred Wahl Marine, Reedsport Machine and Salmon Harbor Marina and RV Park have been able operate and expand in often difficult economic climates. To our knowledge, the Port of Umpqua has never expressed an interest in competing with these private businesses---they have only sought to help businesses succeed and grow.

Our S.T.E.P. hatchery wants to keep our positive working relationship with the Port of Umpqua. We want to maintain our opportunities for economic development with them, but we do not want to worry that a change in the law will allow the Port of Umpqua to become a potential competitor, and not a partner, in our fall Chinook hatchery operation.

Sincerely,


Deborah Yates
President