



ORCA: Oregon Coast Alliance
Protecting the Oregon Coast

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March 14, 2017

Oregon Legislature
Oregon State Capitol
House Committee on Energy and Environment
Salem, OR 97301

Re: HB 2496

Via email: hee.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov

Dear Chair Helm and Members of the Committee,

Oregon Coast Alliance (ORCA) is an Oregon nonprofit whose mission is to protect coastal natural resources and aid in community livability. We write you today concerning HB 2496.

ORCA **opposes** HB 2496. This is a special-interest bill that would appropriate approximately \$452,000 to a private company for the first phase of a sediment study of the lower Rogue River.

The Rogue estuary has major problems of excessive sedimentation, bank-cutting and channel narrowing. This has, and continues to have, serious effects on the Rogue's iconic salmon runs. The problems have been building up for decades as land use changes in the watershed led to clearcut logging, extensive road-building, clearing of riparian areas, instream gravel mining and widespread farming. There is great need for a public process of the sort spearheaded by Oregon Solutions to study the lower Rogue, work with public, private and individual stakeholders, and craft a plan to restore the Rogue estuary to health. The tremendously important salmon populations of the Rogue depend on a healthy estuary.

Providing nearly half a million dollars to a private company with no track record in Oregon to implement merely a first phase study makes neither fiscal nor biological sense, especially in times of such tightly focused budgetary priorities. This is the wrong venue to create a stakeholder process, which is essential to successful large-scale restoration.

The recent Southern Flow Corridor project in Tillamook County shows how to create this kind of success: with all stakeholders, including landowners, on board, Southern Flow is restoring 522 acres of critical Tillamook Bay tidelands, which will benefit the Bay's salmon populations and eliminate flooding in the town of Tillamook. With that success as a guide, the many stakeholders worried about the Rogue estuary's future – including Oregon Coast Alliance – can begin a similar project. Giving a private company a large chunk of state money to begin an individually-driven project is the wrong way down the road.

ORCA respectfully requests the Committee to **not pass** HB 2496. Instead, let the stakeholders begin organizing a project to tackle the Rogue estuary's many problems, for the benefit of the salmon and the communities that depend on them.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Please place this testimony into the record for this measure.

Sincerely,

/s/ Cameron La Follette

Cameron La Follette