



March 13,2017

Trout Unlimited testimony opposing HB 2954

Chair Helm and Committee members-

My name is Tom Wolf, here representing Trout Unlimited, the nation's largest cold water conservation group. Our members are dedicated to protected and restoring wild native salmonids and their habitat. My purpose here today is to state Trout Unlimited's opposition to HB 2954.

Currently, Oregon Natural Resources agencies are experiencing budget deficits and have been asked to make 15% cuts. So, key parts of their programs have been impacted and the agencies will not be able to totally do their mission of conserving and protecting Oregon's natural resources. This lack of staffing and cuts in programs in our Natural Resource agencies will have impacts on those who depend on their economy on natural resources and those of us who recreate in Oregon's out door.

Right now, I am trying to get the money for the Western Streams Restoration Program, \$1 million, restored to ODFW 's budget. This money helps pay for ODFWS staff time to work on projects done by Watershed Councils and other groups, many of them on private lands. Without this money, ODFW cannot provide staff time and these projects would be required to fund scientific studies out of their own funds or grants. The \$5 million dollars HB 2954 is asking for would severely limit the chances of restoring funding for this program and other key programs in natural resources and other state agencies.

Trout Unlimited certainly doesn't want to downplay the problems the town of Crescent in dealing with their sewage treatment problems or seeking an upgrade. But they should be searching for funding from other sources, whether it be grants or local sources, not state general fund. Oregon needs that funding to help pay for key and important programs at state level. So, Trout Unlimited asks that HB 2954 not be passed out of this committee.

Sincerely

Tom Wolf, Trout Unlimited

