



March 27, 2017

### Trout Unlimited testimony on ODFW budget-HB 5010

Co-chairs Frederick and Witt, Committee members-

I am Tom Wolf, here representing Trout Unlimited, the nation's largest cold water conservation group. Our members are dedicated to restoring and protecting the native cold water fish species and their habitat. In our advocacy efforts to accomplish this goal, one of the things we strive to do is make sure that state natural resource agencies have sufficient funding to accomplish their conservation goals. For that reason, I am here today to state Trout Unlimited's support of the 2017-2019 ODFW budget.

I would like to make 3 points in my testimony- protect, cut and restore.

Overall, in the area of protection, Trout Unlimited supports ODFW budget requests and POP's which help in meeting its conservation mission as pertaining to Oregon's native fish. In order to properly meet these goals, there must be adequate staffing both now and in the future. So, keep current budget proposal-and the POP's proposed such as POP 008, which gets funding for 2 water flow staff to work on this important issue. TU also supports POP 104 which provides staffing to work on anadromous fish restoration on Klamath River. These Pop's will insure that future staffing needs are met for very important needs facing wild salmon and trout in our state in the future. As we face the future of fisheries in Oregon, protecting and enhancing key conservation programs and staff are important both to our wild fish and our fishermen/women. I have handed out to you the Oregon Council Trout Unlimited 2016 Annual report which looks at what Trout Unlimited has done primarily on the chapter level, with various restoration projects across the state. Many of these involve working with ODFW staff. We rely on our partnership with ODFW in many restoration areas and it is important that ODFW be funded properly to continue that work.

As far as cuts go, I would look at ways that unnecessary programs can be cut or at ways that programs can be consolidated. For example, hatcheries, which science views as having a negative impact on wild salmonids, can also be seen as a major economic impact on ODFW's budget. One thing ODFW can do is to consolidate more hatcheries, especially closing the ones with large repair requirements. It would be wise to produce the same amount of fish at fewer hatcheries. There is a huge deferred maintenance situation with ODFW hatcheries- closing down the more problematic ones and combining operations could save ODFW and Oregon taxpayers lots of money. ODFW has already done this to some extent but TU would suggest they go even further in their efforts in this area. Trout Unlimited also recommends that ODFW examine their program to cut areas that already being duplicated by other Oregon Natural

Resource agencies. We have made this suggestion before while testifying on other 2017 Natural resource agency budgets and feel it should be done with ODFW also. If we are to be responsible to taxpayers of Oregon as we face future costs, we need to make sure we don't duplicate services at our various natural resource agencies.

Lastly, I want talk about a program which is very important to fisheries in Oregon but did not make the Co-Chairs Ways and Means 15% cut. This program is the Western Streams Restoration Program(WSRP). This program provides funding for ODFW staff to help Watershed councils and NGO's design restoration projects on streams in western Oregon, in alignment with Oregon Salmon Plan. Without this funding of WSRP, watershed councils and NGO's would have to face paying for outside consultants to do the project designs and this would be very expensive, limiting the projects which can be done. ODFW has budgeted slightly over \$1 million for the WSRP and Trout Unlimited would request that this be reinstated in ODFW's 2017-19 budget.

In conclusion, as your committee looks at the 2017-19 budget and all the agency requests, Trout Unlimited asks that important programs in ODFW budget be kept, WSRP be reinserted and we look at consolidating hatchery costs. Trout Unlimited believes that this will help in ODFW pursuing their important conservation mission for protecting Oregon's native fish populations.