



OREGON FARM BUREAU TESTIMONY

Joint Ways and Means Natural Resources Subcommittee

March 29, 2017

HB 5010, Oregon Department Fish & Wildlife Budget

Co-Chairs Witt and Frederick and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the budget for the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (“ODFW”) for the 2017-19 biennium.

By way of background, the Oregon Farm Bureau Federation (OFB) is Oregon’s largest grassroots agriculture association, representing 7,000 farming and ranching families across the state. Our mission is to promote educational improvement, economic opportunity, and social advancement for our members and the farming, ranching, and natural resources industry as a whole.

There are a number of specific ODFW programs that OFB supports, and others we urge the legislature not to fund. OFB supports:

- **Predator Control:** Please restore APHIS Wildlife Services funding. These dollars are leveraged at every level of government to provide crucial depredation support to landowners and communities.
- **Wolf Management:** We have seen increasing conflict with livestock as wolf populations continue to grow in Oregon. One of the positions within the wolf program was slated for a potential cut in the Governor’s Recommended Budget for the 2017-19 biennium. OFB urges restoration of funding and additional support to continue collaring, help provide accurate counts, and ensure that the state is meeting its obligations to landowners under the program.
- **Sage-Grouse:** We urge the legislature to continue the 2015-17 level funding for sage-grouse programs, including POP 142 and the unfunded mitigation position within the ODFW budget.

In addition, OFB has been concerned for several years about acquisition of working farmland for public use. Oregon is blessed to have productive working lands that produce food and fiber, provide wildlife habitat, preserve open spaces and support family businesses. While OFB understands the public attraction to these open landscapes, we are concerned about state conversion of private agricultural lands to public ownership and access. As a policy matter, we believe that Oregon should move away from acquiring working lands (and opening them to



public access) as a primary means of achieving conservation and recreation benefits. As a practical matter, our members have told us that the state frequently does not have the means or ability to design, monitor, and manage public access in a manner that avoids impacts on neighboring landowners. OFB strongly urges the state to focus on better managing the land it already controls instead of adding to its portfolio.

In the 2017-19 budget request, POP 112 and POP 119 both could allow for new acquisitions of farmland. We respectfully ask the Subcommittee to limit the ability of ODFW to spend these funds on the acquisition of farmland.

For more information, please contact Mary Anne Nash (maryanne@oregonfb.org).

