



HB 3228

Testimony of WaterWatch of Oregon Submitted to the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

April 11, 2017

Founded in 1985, WaterWatch is a non-profit river conservation group dedicated to the protection and restoration of natural flows in Oregon's rivers. We work to ensure that enough water is protected in Oregon's rivers to sustain fish, wildlife, recreation and other public uses of Oregon's rivers, lakes and streams. We also work for balanced water laws and policies. WaterWatch has members across Oregon who care deeply about our rivers, their inhabitants and the effects of water laws and policies on these resources

WaterWatch supports HB 3228

ORS 496.012 provides the primary direction to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) for its programs and activities. HB 3228 would make it clear that preventing serious depletion of Oregon's indigenous species is the agency's overriding obligation. HB 3228 also adds to ODFW's goal a directive to protect, maintain and restore indigenous non-game wildlife resources for their intrinsic values, ecosystem functions and long term benefits. This would make clear that it is the responsibility of the agency to protect all species of wildlife and fish, not just those that are hunted and fished.

Oregon's rivers and associated habitats are home to game and non-game species alike. ODFW's work to protect Oregon's rivers and the many indigenous species that rely on them provides a unique and invaluable service to our state. Healthy rivers provide benefits not only to fish and wildlife, but also to farmers, cities, river related businesses and all the citizens of Oregon who enjoy use and enjoy our state's spectacular rivers. This bill helps to clarify that this critical work is of importance, whether or not game species are present.

WaterWatch urges support of HB 3228.

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