

HB 2866 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Agriculture and Natural Resources

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Meeting Dates: 3/21, 4/18

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission to adopt rules governing disposition of adult hatchery produced fish returning to hatchery facilities. Requires at least 50 percent of carcasses from such fish to be retained and placed in natural spawning and rearing areas at seasonally appropriate times to enhance nutrient recycling. Requires Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to prioritize sales of eggs and carcasses from hatchery facilities first to Oregon small businesses in communities with high rates of unemployment. Directs ODFW to conduct biennial analysis on annual return rates of hatchery produced fish and to prepare report for Legislative Assembly no later than February 1 each odd-numbered year. Requires ODFW to post report on department website.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

BACKGROUND:

Nutrient enhancement is recognized as a benefit to fish stocks, as a lack of nutrients can be a limiting factor in the recovery of salmon populations. Since the 1990s, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), with the approval of the Department of Environmental Quality, has conducted a comprehensive nutrient enhancement program where excess hatchery fish carcasses are placed in streams by volunteers. During 2011-2012, ODFW, with the help of partners and volunteers placed more than 36,000 hatchery surplus fish carcasses in 107 waterways across the state. Under current law (ORS 164.785), it is unlawful for a person to discard any dead animal carcass into a water body, irrigation ditch or cistern unless returning a fish carcass to the water from which the person caught the fish.

House Bill 2866 would direct ODFW to retain carcasses of at least half of adult hatchery produced fish returning to hatchery facilities and place them at seasonally appropriate times in natural spawning and rearing areas to enhance nutrient recycling. The bill would require ODFW to prioritize Oregon businesses, especially those in communities with high unemployment, when selling hatchery fish eggs. The bill would also require ODFW to conduct an analysis every two years and report back to the Legislative Assembly by February 1 of odd-numbered years on the annual return rates of hatchery produced fish.