



Trout Unlimited

May.11,2017

Trout Unlimited support for HB 2321

Chair Dembrow and Committee members,

My name is Tom Wolf, Executive Director Oregon Council Trout Unlimited, here representing the 3200 members of TU in Oregon and the 160,000 throughout the United States. Trout Unlimited, as the largest coldwater conservation group in the nation, supports HB 2321 which will help in the continuing battle to combat aquatic invasive species.

One of the most under estimated dangers to wild trout and salmon habitat throughout our country is the threat of aquatic invasive species, such as zebra and quagga mussels. In other parts of our nation, these species and others have invaded waterways and caused billions of dollars of economic impact as well as major ecological destruction. Once these invasive species get established in waterways, they are incredibly difficult, if not impossible, to remove. The best way to deal with these plants and animals, is to prevent their introduction by stopping their entrance at key enter points. Studies show that many of these invasive species enter state waterways as uninvited guests on boats, driven across state line by the unknowing boat owner. Creating boat inspection stations, which both inspect and clean these invasive species off boats, is the best deterrent for dealing with this massive environmental danger.

In 2009, a bill was passed which created these boat inspection stations, funded by a State Marine invasive species fee and staffed by ODFW personnel. In 2011, a bill was passed which put more teeth into these stations by making it a requirement that boats had to enter boat inspection stations. Now, with HB 2321, law enforcement officers would be able to force drivers with boats to go back to the inspection station if they try to bypass them. This is the final piece to truly make these inspection stations the most efficient deterrent for stopping the entrance of these mussels, plants, snails and other species into Oregon.

As one final point, there might be an amendment that would add back in the part of HB 2321, which was stripped in the House, that would lower the limit of boats that would have to pay invasive species fee to all boats, regardless of size and get rid of the 10-foot limit now in place. TU thinks this would be a good amendment as it would help provide more fees for the boat inspection stations, both to deal with

current costs of the program and perhaps to add more boat inspection stations and the staff to run them. Trout Unlimited supports this amendment.

As several of you know, this is the last Oregon legislative session that I will be down in Salem representing Trout Unlimited. As I look forward to a well-deserved reward in retirement (in my mind anyway!) of fly fishing, hunting, backpacking, writing, working at youth center and coaching basketball, I am looking at what my legacy is. An issue that is of great importance to me is, and that I have spent many, many hours working on, is preventing and eradicating invasive species. It would give me great satisfaction, in my last few months of this work, to see the passage of HB 2321. It would be of great benefit for fish, water and stream habitat of Oregon, the people who frequent our waterways to boat or fish, conservation/fishing groups such Trout Unlimited, and ,if I can state this in a modest way, of great personal satisfaction to someone who has strived for many years to protect and restore the habitat ,wild fish and water of Oregon.

I urge the Committee to please pass HB 2321.

Thank you for allowing me to testify.

Sincerely,

Tom Wolf,

Executive Director

Oregon Council Trout Unlimited