



Oregon Council Trout Unlimited

May 27, 2017

Trout Unlimited testimony in opposition to HB 2099

Chair Dembrow and Committee members-

My name is Tom Wolf, here representing Trout Unlimited. The nation's largest cold water conservation Organization with 3200 members in Oregon and 155,000 across the country. Both the TU volunteers and staff work hard in many areas such as restoration projects, advocacy, education, etc. in order to protect wild salmon and trout and their habitat. I am here today to state Trout Unlimited's opposition to HB 2099, which is being heard before you today.

There is language developed within Oregon statues which requires a minimum flow so that there can be adequate flow for "fish persistence" or enough water for wild native fish survival in streams that municipalities draw their water from. This has been the common theme of statues to make sure that water is available for all uses including ensuring that wild fish-salmon and trout-have enough flow for their needs. Trout Unlimited feels that HB 2099, in its present language, would allow municipalities to draw more water from streams and thus deprive our native fish of their needs. TU is also concerned about current amendments that target Hood river area streams.

Recreational fishing brings over \$1 billion into Oregon's economy every year (Dean Runyun, NSIA, 2013). This money includes money spent within rural economies on items like food, restaurants and hotels. Keeping wild fish populations healthy by insuring adequate water for good levels of stream flows is not only important for Oregon's native fish but our economy as well. HB 2099 as currently written would have negative impact on flows for fish.

Having stated all the reasons for TU opposing HB 2099, I would like to relate a conversation I once had with Rep. Gilliam. He asked me why the conservation community was always saying "No" to every bill that was looking for, in his opinion, a common-sense solution. I have thought long and hard about what he said 6 years ago. In the spirit of the words of a man I deeply respect, I would hope that TU and other conservation groups can work out their differences on HB 2099 and come up with a solution everyone can live with. We owe that to Oregon and to people like Rep. Gilliam. But water needed for protecting native wild trout and salmon must not be sacrificed in the process.

Trout Unlimited pledges to help work on that consensus solution for issues raised in HB 2099.

