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Trout Unlimited testimony in Support of HB 2213-3

Tom Wolf, Executive Director Oregon Council Trout Unlimited

Before House Rules Committee

Chair Williamson and Committee members-

I am Tom Wolf, here representing the 3200 members of Trout Unlimited here in Oregon and our 160,000 nationwide. Trout Unlimited is the country's largest cold-water conservation group and, uniquely, it's members are primarily anglers and hunters. Our volunteers here in Oregon, do thousands of hours of stream restoration and advocacy work to restore and protect the habitat of our native cold-water species, like trout and salmon. During many of these projects TU members work closely with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife staff and have a good relationship with that agency. Trout Unlimited recognizes that the old model of funding ODFW work with fishing and hunting license fees is not providing enough funds for the critical work ODFW does. That is why I am here today to testify in support of HB 2213-3.

In 2015, I, representing Trout Unlimited, worked very hard to pass HB 2402, which set up a task force to look at ways to provide long term funding for ODFW. After meeting for several months, the task force came up with suggestions that proposed specific long-term funding strategies and moved this concept forward as HB 3270. For various reasons, HB 3270 has not moved forward and appears dead in committee. A proposed alternative HB 2213-3 creates a mechanism to work on helping to implement ODFW long term funding reform by creating the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Advisory Committee(OCRAC). This committee would be appointed by the Governor and would advise the ODFW Commission on how to fund agency long term and look at long-term conservation/recreation needs of the agency. Their duties are spelled out in body of the -3 amendments and would help lead ODFW to a better way of meeting future conservation needs and funding issues.

Our state, as it continues to grow and expand in population, has multiple issues facing it for the future, both for conservation of native fish and wildlife and the recreational needs of Oregonians wishing to enjoy our resources in hunting, fishing, hiking, viewing, etc. HB 2213-3 sets a path to help ODFW look at ways to deal with their future and look at future funding needs also. As a conservation group composed of sportsmen and sportswomen, Trout Unlimited urges your committee to pass HB 2213-3 onto House floor because it would benefit ODFW and help in the future enjoyment of our wildlife and fish species by all Oregonians.

