



February 6, 2018

Senator Michael Dembrow, Chair
Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Representative Ken Helm, Chair
House Committee on Energy and Environment

Re: Trout Unlimited Comments on Senate Bill 1507 and House Bill 4001

Dear Chair Dembrow, Chair Helm and Members of the Committees,

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on Senate Bill 1507 and House Bill 4001 (collectively referred to as “Cap and Invest legislation”). My name is Chandra Ferrari and I represent Trout Unlimited (TU), a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of cold-water fishes, such as trout and salmon, and their habitats. Trout Unlimited has more than 300,000 members and supporters nationwide including over 3,000 in Oregon.

The Cap and Invest legislation represents a strong step in the right direction toward addressing climate change and its impacts and we support it moving forward. However, TU requests that the Committees consider several amendments to ensure that the legislation sufficiently considers and addresses the acute impacts that climate change has on Oregon’s natural resources.

First, we suggest that the legislation direct the natural resource agencies to collaboratively develop a climate adaptation strategy that identifies actions that will help Oregon, and its natural resources, prepare and respond to the effects of climate change. The strategy would also serve to prioritize investments and direct resources toward the most impactful actions. Second, we suggest that the legislation clearly dedicate a portion of the auction proceeds to fund actions identified in the climate adaptation strategy to help strengthen the resiliency of ecosystems and fish and wildlife populations to the impacts of climate change.

Healthy and resilient watersheds and ecosystems provide a range of benefits for humans, the environment and the economy such as a safe and reliable drinking supply, healthy and harvestable fish populations and a thriving recreation industry. Fish populations are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change as they require sufficient quantity and quality of water to persist and their resiliency has already been weakened by existing management activities and other stressors. Investing resources to help watersheds and fish and wildlife develop resiliency to climate change will help ensure that the many benefits that Oregonians have come to rely on will continue for future generations including that Oregon’s iconic fisheries thrive and are able to support a robust recreational and commercial economy.

Investments in healthy watersheds also translate to living-wage jobs and can stimulate local economies (often in rural communities). For instance, recent analysis shows that investments in 6,740 watershed restoration projects completed in the state of Oregon from 2001 to 2010 supported close to 6500 jobs and generated 977.5 million in economic activity in Oregon.¹ These projects often occur in rural communities where there may be limited job opportunities and these jobs stay local (cannot be outsourced). TU has experienced this first hand with many of our cooperative restoration projects; they help watersheds and natural resources but also local economies. The majority of the investments in these projects flow straight to local businesses for engineering work, materials acquisition and construction services among other items.

In sum, resiliency investments are needed to ensure that Oregon's fish and wildlife populations and ecosystems are able to persist and thrive into the future. Healthy watersheds and resilient fish and wildlife populations are good for Oregon's environment, economy and citizens.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 1507 and House Bill 4001. TU looks forward to engaging in the continuing discussions on this legislation.

¹ Oregon's Restoration Economy, Ecotrust available at <https://ecotrust.org/media/WWRI-Restoration-Economy-Brochure.pdf>.