



February 7, 2018

Representative Brian Clem, Chair
House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources

Re: Trout Unlimited Comments on House Bill 4015

Dear Chair Clem and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on House Bill 4015. 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.

TU supports HB 4015. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) is tasked with many important and varied functions including the conservation and management of fish, wildlife and habitat. ODFW's traditional source of funding (hunting and fishing fees) is not adequate to meet its needs over the long-term nor equitable. The HB 2402 Task Force on Funding for Fish, Wildlife and Related Recreation and Education (Task Force) was charged with considering more diverse, sustainable sources of revenues for ODFW. A main recommendation from the Task Force was the creation of an Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund to provide ODFW with a vehicle to receive revenues dedicated to particular goals including conservation actions.

HB 4015 establishes the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund (Conservation Fund) along with an Advisory Committee to guide its disbursements. Additionally, HB 4015 allocates 13 million dollars in general fund to the Conservation Fund. This is an important first step toward establishing a more diverse, sustainable funding stream for ODFW. Additionally, it provides a ready mechanism for ODFW to receive federal funds should H.R. 4647 (Recovering America's Wildlife Act) pass. H.R. 4647 could provide Oregon approximately 50 million per biennium to implement conservation actions. However, Oregon would be required to provide a 25% match to access the funds. The establishment of the Conservation Fund and general fund allocation would ensure Oregon is ready to meet this requirement.

Healthy and sustainable fish and wildlife populations are critical components of Oregon's environment, economy and way of life. It is extremely important that ODFW have sufficient resources to ensure they are sustainably managed into the future.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 4015. TU looks forward to engaging in the continuing discussions on this legislation.

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