



Testimony on Co-Chair Rebalance Plan for Agency Reductions

Joint Interim Committee on Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Natural Resources

July 21, 2020

Co-Chairs Representative Reardon and Senator Taylor, and Members of the Joint Interim Committee on Ways and Means on Natural Resources:

Humane Voters Oregon is an Oregon-only nonprofit that advocates for humane treatment of animals. Please consider our comments as follows to the Co-Chair Rebalance Plan Reductions.

First, we hope you will find a way to **preserve funding for the anti-poaching programs** in the Department of Fish and Wildlife (items 236 and 238). For several years now, the Legislature has recognized that poaching is a serious problem in Oregon. In response, the Legislature has passed a series of bills to increase penalties for poaching and, in 2019, to increase funding for enforcement of laws against poaching. These changes were supported by a broad range of stakeholders. Wildlife management in Oregon is controversial, but hunting groups, conservation groups and animal-welfare groups generally all agree that laws to protect the state's precious wildlife resources from poaching should be vigorously enforced. Moreover, funding to enforce our wildlife laws already is being reduced in the Fish and Wildlife Division of the Oregon State Police. Thus, even in these difficult times, the anti-poaching programs in the Department of Fish and Wildlife should remain a high priority.

Second, we **support elimination of the additional "predator control" funding** given to the departments of Agriculture and Fish and Wildlife (items 205 and 246). This funding would be used primarily to kill wildlife deemed to interfere with agriculture and other business. These activities are often cruel, highly controversial and, as we believe the science increasingly shows, largely ineffective. Thus, they are not a wise use of limited government resources.

Thank you for your consideration.

Brian Posewitz

Brian Posewitz
Director



OREGON HUNTERS ASSOCIATION

Protecting Oregon's Wildlife, Habitat and Hunting Heritage

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July 22, 2020

Co-Chairs Rep. Reardon and Senator Taylor and Members of the Joint Interim Committee on Ways and Means on Natural Resources:

For the record I am Al Elkins, representing the Oregon Hunters Association. I am here today to address the rebalancing of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) budget for the 2019-2022 biennium. I would like to address specifically items #236 the "anti-poaching campaign" reduction of \$1,296,253 and #238 the "anti-poaching vacancy savings reduce services and supplies" reduction of \$276,094, for Oregon State Police (OSP) enforcement.

During the 2019 Legislative Session ODFW received General Fund monies for the establishment of an anti-poaching program. This program in part was to make the public aware that poaching is an epidemic in Oregon and how they could help combat it. Obviously, given the world we live in today, general fund monies are almost non-existent. We understand that, with the \$1.2 million reduction only \$191,247 is left in the budget to continue funding for the Public Affairs position for this program since all the remaining monies for the program is a proposed reduction. All public outreach about the poaching crisis in Oregon is gone which is a key element in protecting such a precious resource.

This coupled with the reduction of the \$276,094 for the OSP enforcement leaves Oregon vulnerable in not protecting a valuable resource: fish and wildlife.

In our testimony before this committee on June 17th we pointed out that reducing monies for enforcement now is even more problematic, for at the hearing in June the Fish and Wildlife Division (FWD) of the Oregon State Police because of the lottery revenue shortfall, had already moved 6 lottery funded FWD troopers to other funded vacancies and another 15 to Patrol Division. Obviously, this has impacted FWD enforcement efforts around the state.

As you can see enforcement of Oregon's wildlife laws is taking a big hit with these proposed cuts. The Oregon Hunters Association understands the current funding crisis that we find ourselves in, but we want the Committee to be aware of the crisis these proposed cuts puts our vulnerable wildlife in. Oregon's fish and game are a big part of our state's ability to generate revenues providing recreational opportunities to those that fish, hunt, and view wildlife in their natural habitat. We urge the reinstatement of some of these important program dollars to help protect a valuable resource of this state: Oregon's wildlife.



OREGON FARM BUREAU TESTIMONY

Joint Ways and Means Natural Resources Subcommittee

July 22, 2020

Co-Chairs Taylor and Reardon and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the proposed budget cuts to Oregon's natural resource agencies as a result of COVID-19 related budget shortfalls. Like other Oregon industries, Oregon's farmers and ranchers have been hit hard by COVID-19 related economic impacts, as key markets dried up, supply chains were disrupted, and international trade ground to a halt. Despite these challenges, Oregon's farmers and ranchers are still farming, and working hard to bring safe, reliable, and sustainable food and fiber to local, regional, and international markets.

By way of background, Oregon Farm Bureau (OFB) is Oregon's largest grassroots agriculture association, representing over 6,000 farming and ranching families across the state. Our mission is to promote educational improvement, economic opportunity, and social advancement for our members and the farming, ranching, and natural resources industry as a whole.

Agriculture is the state's second largest traded sector industry, and the programs housed within Oregon's natural resources agencies are critical to our members' operations. While we understand that all agencies are going to need to "tighten their belts" to weather this economic crisis, we are concerned about cuts to some core program areas that will disproportionately impact our members and ultimately harm their ability to stay viable and survive the COVID-19 crisis. We ask for your help in supporting the agency programs needed to ensure Oregon's farmers and ranchers to stay in business throughout this crisis. Farms and ranches are the backbone of their local economies and supply critical goods and services needed during the pandemic.

We urge the Subcommittee to reconsider the following program area budget changes:

- **Oregon Department of Agriculture:**
 - *Predator Control Funding (\$200,000 in ODA, \$200,000 in ODFW):* Predators are a significant source of losses to livestock producers around the state. These dollars are leveraged at every level of government to provide crucial depredation support to landowners and communities.
 - *Invasive Species Council Funding (\$280,000):* The invasive species council conducts a comprehensive and coordinated effort to prevent, detect, control and eliminate invasive species harming the region's economy, health, and natural



resources. This work is critical to our natural resources industry and needs to remain well-funded.

- **Oregon Department of Forestry:**
 - *Rangeland Fire Protection Association Funding (\$185,000)*: RFPAs are the first line of defense against wildfires in many parts of Oregon. The state should continue to ensure they are funded to help quickly contain wildfires that otherwise may go unchecked and cause millions in damage to Oregon's natural resources and wildlife habitat.
 - *Increase Base Protection Cost Funding for Landowners (\$1,948,173)*: The 50/50 split between landowners and the state is fundamental to our wildfire protection system, and must be maintained.
- **Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife:**
 - *Wolf Program (\$323,404)*: These dollars help support wolf-depredation compensation, non-lethal deterrence and technical assistance to landowners to implement the Oregon Wolf Plan. Livestock owners already bear a disproportionate burden of wolf reintroduction – eliminating this funding would be detrimental to landowner buy in to the wolf program.
- **Oregon Department of Water Resources:**
 - *Field Services Funding*: These field services dollars help fund the on-the-ground work that is critical to effective management of our state's water resources. This program is already severely underfunded, and further curtailments should not be considered.
 - *Measurement Cost Share (\$106,914)*
 - *Vacancy Savings (\$578,251)*
 - *Fund Shift (\$522,262)*
 - *Gaging Stations (\$27,186) and Observation Wells (\$50,000)*: Data collection is critical to management of our state's water resources, and we should not reduce funding that goes toward getting us the data we need to manage these resources in the long-term.
 - Further, we understand that OWRD is facing a budget shortfall due to increased litigation costs. We recognize the need for a comprehensive audit of the Department's programs and resources and support the legislature working to ensure that OWRD remains committed to its core priorities. However, cuts to key OWRD program areas without addressing the litigation expenses or reviewing the Department's prioritization of resources will only compound the issues caused by decades of underfunding and mission expansion. We urge you not to cut key field services that the Department needs to remain functional.

Contact: Mary Anne Cooper (maryanne@oregonfb.org)





July 21, 2020

Joint Ways & Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources
900 Court St. NE
Salem Oregon 97301

Re: Co-chair Rebalance Plan for Agency Reductions

Dear Co-Chairs Taylor and Reardon and members of the committee,

The Native Fish Society exists to cultivate the groundswell of public support needed to revive abundant wild fish, free-flowing rivers, and thriving local communities. This vision for wild abundance directly intersects with the funding priorities advanced by this committee for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

There are three essential investments needed to support thriving wild fisheries: healthy habitats, robust monitoring, and adequate enforcement. Unfortunately, these key investments have long gone unfunded or underfunded and our wild fish populations are in serious jeopardy.

The Habitat Division of ODFW was disbanded 10 years ago due to funding cuts. This group safeguarded key habitats, cold water refuges, and instream flows. Thankfully this program is being considered once again for funding in the next biennium as the ODFW Commission's top policy option package, but at this point that funding is tenuous.

Essential fisheries monitoring for some of our state's most iconic fisheries, like steelhead fishing on the Rogue River and Wild Rivers Coast, have been defunded to the point where biologists do not know how many fish return to our rivers from the ocean and how many fish are caught in the fishery. Managing a fishery without this basic information is like writing checks without knowing the balance of your bank account.

At present, this committee is proposing to weaken the third leg of the stool needed to support abundant wild fish—enforcement. Illegal, unreported and underreported harvest or poaching is a substantial concern for the many imperiled and declining wild fish species across the state. Without programs that educate and enforce fisheries regulations, we know that community members, either through a lack of education or belief that they will not be caught, will break the law.

We are actively divesting the department of the essential elements needed to revive abundant wild fish. We must make these investments not only to support our fisheries and commercial and recreational anglers, but to support the wellbeing of our state and the desire of all Oregonians to have healthy and flourishing ecosystems.

In order to prioritize and invest in these essential elements, we urge the subcommittee to shift hatchery propagation funding out of the General Fund and into ODFW License Funds. General Funds should be allocated to programs that benefit the public at large and execute those actions at the core of ODFW's mission to protect and enhance Oregon's fish and wildlife and their habitats. Hatchery operations, most of which do not serve a conservation purpose and many of which impede the recovery of wild fish, are merely an interim bridge while we make the investments necessary to revive wild fish.

In this light, establishing hatcheries as the top funding priority for the department instead of the investments necessary to revive abundant wild fish is deeply problematic.

It's time to undertake a thoughtful approach to evaluate and rightsize the state's extensive and aging hatchery infrastructure. We need to systematically divest the state of harmful hatchery programs with a focus on the worst offenders—those that impede the recovery of wild fish and those that degrade water quality, like the nonnative Santiam Summer Steelhead propagation program.

Saving our fisheries is fundamentally dependent on reviving abundant wild fish, and this objective must be at the heart of the agency's funding decisions.

Sincerely,


Jennifer Fairbrother
Conservation Director



Testimony to the Joint Ways and Means Natural Resource Subcommittee

To: Representative Jeff Reardon, Senator Kathleen Taylor, Co-Chairs
Fr: David Moskowitz, Executive Director
Dt: July 22, 2020
Re: Comments on the Re-Balancing Plan for the 2019-2021 Natural Resource Budgets

The Conservation Angler appreciates the difficult work this committee is undertaking.

General Comments and Support

TCA urges the Committee to think strategically regarding protecting Oregon's natural wonders of vibrant and distinct ecoregions, flowing rivers, mountains and canyons, clean water, and all sorts of unique and irreplaceable wild creatures.

These natural elements are essentially Oregon's environmental "base budget." 2019-2021 budget reduction and re-balancing choices should maximize their protection, conservation, and sustainability.

Oregon's environment is our "natural capital" and budget decisions, reductions or cuts made during this period must avoid irretrievable losses of Oregon's natural capital.

Overall, Natural Resource budget cuts are disproportionate to this state agency sector compared to the state investment in them. This has been a recurring theme for many years and under-values their importance to the state's economic and cultural health. It is time to end this short-sighted habit.

TCA supports the Joint Ways and Means Co-chair's concept of prioritizing programs that should be cut rather than simply making across-the-board cuts to all programs. Cutting all programs equally assumes that all programs are of the same importance, which is not the case.

TCA urges the Co-chairs to use specific agency "Program Priorities" documents to assist in determining which programs could be reduced or eliminated. Finally, vacancies, while an easy choice to cut, are not reflective of low priorities, and should not be the default reduction.

Cuts Inconsistent with Priorities and Guidance Provided by Joint Ways and Means Committee Co-Chairs

Ways and Means Priority: Maintain Current OSP Patrol Trooper Strength

This overall priority is disregarded by the proposals to reduce the Anti-poaching initiative in the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) budget reductions or savings in items #236 and #238.

These two items total **\$1,572,747**.

TCA believes that the proposed cuts to the anti-poaching campaign are avoidable. TCA suggests that ODFW pay for the campaign with a fund shift of General Fund (GF) dollars from the fish propagation budget.

Overall, as a budget principle, GF dollars should be allocated to programs that benefit the public at large while hatchery operations should be paid for by the commercial and recreational fishing interests who believe they benefit from hatchery programs. Additionally, ODFW has Other Fund cash reserves that could be used to bridge the funding gap for this program.

Additional Priorities and Guidance Provided by Joint Ways and Means Committee Co-Chairs

- Priority: Prudent use of Reserve Funds to sustain programs and services going forward.
- Priority: Evaluate programs and services for efficacy and cost-savings and make permanent reductions where appropriate.
- Priority: Prioritize programs and services so that reductions are based on values rather than an “across the board” methodology.

TCA generally supports ODFW’s priorities. However, ODFW’s #1 priority item of fish hatcheries is misplaced. The Legislature must come to terms with the financial and ecological costs of hatcheries which outweigh any benefit they may provide to the fishing industries.

ODFW’s salmon and steelhead hatcheries should not be spared from a deeper analysis of their effectiveness. Chronic environmental problems, facilities in disrepair, and program conflicts with state goals related to Climate Change resiliency and Endangered Species Act wild steelhead and salmon recovery are all reasons to take a careful and critical look at Oregon’s failing investment in hatcheries.

One exception exists to this general rule - trout fishing in Oregon is the number one activity that is supported by hatchery production from ODFW. These programs generate license dollars and provide for family outdoor activities. Trout hatcheries are also operated with fewer conflicts with anadromous fish conservation efforts.

Oregon’s wild salmon and wild steelhead contribute more to sport and commercial fisheries than hatchery fish. Coastal wild winter steelhead, fall chinook, and coho salmon are dominated by wild stocks. Oregon’s marine fisheries for salmon, halibut, rockfish, ling cod and all shellfish (crab and pink shrimp) are wild fish fisheries that generate multiple benefits to Oregon.

On the other hand, poor survival of hatchery salmon and steelhead increasingly result in fishery closures in specific waters where not enough hatchery fish are returning to specific hatcheries to meet their broodstock collection goals. The hatchery fish barely return in numbers to meet the hatchery egg-take. As a result, fisheries aimed to reduce the presence of hatchery fish spawning in the wild are closed to protect the hatchery itself. This endless cycle is worsening across Oregon. Removing funding from ODFW hatchery programs and returning to wild salmon and steelhead conservation management as a statewide priority will be an investment in the only management tool that works - Conservation - rather than hatchery replacement of Oregon’s legacy wild steelhead and salmon.

Senator Betsy Johnson, Co-Chair
Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, Co-Chair
Representative Dan Rayfield, Co-Chair
Ways and Means Natural Resources Subcommittee

RE: Funding for Oregon's Marine Reserves Program in the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife

Dear Chairs Johnson, Steiner Hayward, and Rayfield:

As North Oregon Coast residents, we write to express our strong support for maintaining funding for Oregon's Marine Reserves Program, housed within the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife. We recognize that the economic crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic has presented many difficult decisions to the legislature. Given the small number, recent inception, and upcoming required assessment and evaluation of the Marine Reserves, we urge you to retain funding for the Marine Reserves Program so that its mission can be fulfilled.

Oregon's ocean contains remarkable biodiversity, including some of the most biodiverse marine areas in the world. The Marine Reserves Program supports the health of our ocean, the species that live in it, and the coastal communities that depend on coastal ecosystems for both sustenance and tourism dollars.

Oregon's Marine Reserves Program is relatively small. Oregon took a more cautious approach than Washington and California when creating the program in 2009, setting aside about 9% of Oregon's Territorial Sea as protected areas, consisting of five marine reserves and nine associated marine protected areas. These special areas in Oregon's ocean are dedicated to conservation and scientific research. What we're learning through the Marine Reserves Program's research activities is being used to support the management of sustainable nearshore ocean resources in Oregon.

Oregon's Marine Reserves legislation called for a program evaluation to follow 10 years later, statutorily requiring ODFW to deliver an assessment and report to the legislature for discussion during the 2023 session. Cuts identified during the governor's allotment list process, and carried forward into the Co-Chairs' rebalance plan, have included the agency staff position tasked to prepare this important report for legislative review. The work of the Natural Resource Specialist 3, a position temporarily vacant at the time those lists were produced, is critical to ensure the accurate compilation of data, the coordination of the report's production, and ultimate communications for the legislative discussion.

Additionally, the agency-proposed cut to the contract with Oregon State Police to ensure compliance and enforcement of the reserves and protected areas puts both the science and management of these special places at risk.

After over a decade of investment we urge the legislature to continue the integrity of the program by maintaining funding, which is critical to the legacy created by Oregon's extensive efforts to establish and evaluate this program for the benefit of our ocean resources, coastal communities and all Oregonians.

Thank you for your consideration,
Friends of Cape Falcon Marine Reserve

Contact: Margaret Treadwell / 503-298-5190 / CapeFalconMR@gmail.com

Senator Betsy Johnson, Co-Chair
Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, Co-Chair
Representative Dan Rayfield, Co-Chair
Ways and Means Natural Resources Subcommittee

Subject: Letter of Support for Maintaining Funding for Oregon's Marine Reserves Program in the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife

Dear Chairs Johnson, Steiner Hayward, and Rayfield:

As a resident of Oregon's North Coast, we want to express our strong support for maintaining funding for Oregon's Marine Reserves Program, housed within the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife. We understand the difficult fiscal decisions the legislature faces caused by the coronavirus pandemic. However, cutting funding to the Marine Reserve Program undermines the great conservation work done to date, and will cause the state to have to invest significantly more in the future to restart efforts, including habitat conservation, restoration, and research.

Given the small number of Marine Reserves, recent inception, and upcoming required assessment and evaluation of the Marine Reserves, we urge you to retain funding for the Marine Reserves Program so that its mission can be fulfilled. This program has come far, now is not the time to reduce its ability to demonstrate what the people of Oregon, supported by the legislature, had in mind when the Marine Reserves Program was implemented.

The Marine Reserves Program supports the health of our ocean, the species that live in it, and the coastal communities that depend on coastal ecosystems for both sustenance and tourism dollars. Great progress has been made in protecting these sensitive areas. Oregon's Territorial Sea protected areas, consisting of five marine reserves and nine associated marine protected areas are special areas in dedicated to conservation and scientific research. What we're learning through the Marine Reserves Program's research activities is being used to support the management of sustainable nearshore ocean resources in Oregon. The Oregon's Marine Reserves legislation called for a program evaluation to follow 10 years later, statutorily requiring ODFW to deliver an assessment and report to the legislature for discussion during the 2023 session. Cuts identified during the governor's allotment list process, and carried forward into the rebalance plan, have included the agency staff position tasked to prepare this important report for legislative review. The work of the Natural Resource Specialist 3, a position temporarily vacant at the time those lists were produced, is critical to ensure the accurate compilation of data, the coordination of the report's production, and ultimate communications for the legislative discussion.

The agency-proposed cut to the contract with Oregon State Police to ensure compliance and enforcement of the reserves and protected areas puts both the science and management of these special places at risk. With all the visitors to this area during normal times, and the huge influx of visitors currently longing to be outdoors because of the pandemic, this area is at great risk without the support of the Oregon State Police.

After over a decade of investment we urge the legislature to continue the integrity of the program by maintaining funding for the Marine Reserves Program and the legacy created by Oregon's citizens and legislature in protecting and preserving these critical areas. At a time when nationally our environmental protections are being destroyed, we ask that you demonstrate that Oregon sets a different standard for protecting the environment.

Thank you,

Angela and Jim Benton
PO Box 591
Cannon Beach, OR 97110

Cc:
Senator Betsy Johnson
Representative Tiffany Mitchell

July 24, 2020

To: Co-Chairs Representative Jeff Reardon, and Senator Kathleen Taylor, and the members of the The Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources, Senator Betsy Johnson, Co-Chair , Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, Co-Chair, Representative Dan Rayfield, Co-Chair

Cc: Senate President Peter Courtney
Senate Majority Leader Rob Wagner
Speaker of the House Tina Kotek
House Majority Leader Barbara Smith-Warner
Governor's Natural Resources Policy Manager Jason Miner
Governor's Natural Resources Policy Advisor Amira Streeter

RE: Funding for Oregon's Marine Reserves Program in the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife

Dear Legislators:

The undersigned organizations write to express our strong support for maintaining funding for Oregon's Marine Reserves Program, housed within the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife. We recognize the difficult decisions before the legislature during the economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, but urge you to support the health of our ocean, the species that live within it, and the local coastal communities that depend upon them by ensuring this program remains intact during the budget rebalance by retaining the Natural Resource Specialist 3 position that is slated for elimination within the proposed vacancy savings.

The creation of Oregon's Marine Reserves and Protected Areas and the resulting monitoring and management program represents one of the greatest bipartisan ocean conservation victories in Oregon's history. These five special areas in Oregon's ocean, selected following a nearly ten-year public process and officially designated in 2009 and 2012 by the Oregon legislature, are dedicated to conservation and scientific research and are protected from extractive activities. What we're learning from these living laboratories is being used to support the management of sustainable nearshore ocean resources and coastal communities in Oregon.

The marine reserve and protected area sites themselves, and ODFW's associated management and monitoring program, are the result of a highly extensive planning effort engaging local communities and a wide variety of ocean users through the Ocean Policy Advisory Council (OPAC), two consecutive Governor's offices and ultimately the Oregon Legislature. Oregon's Marine Reserves and Protected Areas were developed with the goals of supporting conservation of biodiversity, nearshore ocean research and coastal communities.

When creating the program in 2009, Oregon took a more cautious approach than our neighboring states, designating just five marine reserves and nine associated protected areas representing about 9% of Oregon's Territorial Sea. The legislation called for a program evaluation to follow 10 years later, statutorily requiring ODFW to deliver an assessment and report to the legislature for discussion during the 2023 session.

However, cuts identified during the governor's allotment list process, and carried forward into the Co-Chairs' rebalance plan, have included the agency staff position tasked to prepare this important report for legislative review. The work of the Natural Resource Specialist 3, a position temporarily vacant at the time those lists were produced, is critical to ensure the accurate compilation of data, the coordination of the report's production and ultimate communications for the legislative discussion. Additionally, the agency-proposed cut to the contract with Oregon State Police to ensure compliance and enforcement of the reserves and protected areas, puts both the science and management of these special places at risk.

After over a decade of investment we urge the legislature to continue the integrity of the program by retaining these positions. Maintaining this funding is critical to the legacy created by Oregon's extensive efforts to establish and evaluate this program for the benefit of our ocean resources, coastal communities and all Oregonians.

Thank you for your consideration,

Signed:

Environment Oregon
League of Women Voters of Oregon
Native Fish Society
The Nature Conservancy
Oceana
Oregon Coast Alliance
Oregon League of Conservation Voters
Oregon Shores Conservation Coalition
Oregon Wild
Portland Audubon
Surfrider Foundation