



Oregon

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To: The Honorable Michael Dembrow Chair
Senate Committee on Environmental and Natural Resources



Senate Bill 42

The Department appreciates your consideration of Senate Bill 42. The bill would remove sunset dates on the Columbia River Fisheries Enhancement Fund and the Restoration and Enhancement Program. Additionally, it would modify the meeting timing and member requirements of the Restoration and Enhancement Board.

Columbia River Fisheries Enhancement Fund

The Columbia River Fisheries Enhancement Fund was established by the legislature via Senate Bill 830 in 2013 to provide funding to implement measures that enhance fisheries, optimize the economic benefits of fisheries, and advance native fish conservation related to the Columbia River fish management and reform (CR Reform) policy. The State of Washington has a similar policy necessary for joint-state management of non-tribal fisheries in the Columbia River. As part of Oregon's legislation, the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission was authorized to charge an additional fee for recreational angling for salmon, steelhead, and sturgeon in the Columbia Basin, via the Columbia River Basin Endorsement (CRBE), to generate revenues for the enhancement fund. The fee established by the Commission is \$9.75/year or \$1/day, and generates approximately \$2.5 M/biennium for implementation of the CR Reform policy.

Activities supported by the CRBE are foundational to achieving the overall goals of the CR Reform policy. Funds from this source have been used to increase harvests in off-channel commercial fisheries by increasing hatchery production in those areas. This increased production in off-channel areas was necessary to offset fishery allocation shifts toward recreational fisheries and the removal of non-tribal gillnet fisheries in the mainstem during spring and summer. The CRBE funds also provide better monitoring of both commercial and recreational fisheries, improve management of salmon, steelhead and sturgeon in the Columbia, and increase enforcement by the Oregon State Police Fish and Wildlife unit.

Per ORS 508.980 the fee and the fund will sunset January 2, 2022. Senate Bill 42 would remove the sunset date from the Columbia River Fisheries Enhancement Fund. Continuing the Columbia River

Basin Endorsement fee will provide stable future funding for production of salmon for harvest in off-channel areas, and monitoring fisheries to assess performance, ensure ESA compliance, and inform season management decisions; all necessary to continue implementation of the CR Reform policy.

Restoration and Enhancement Program

SB 42 will improve the operations of the Restoration and Enhancement Program and continue the programs benefit to Oregonians and Oregon's fisheries.

The Legislature established the Restoration and Enhancement (R&E) Program in 1989. It has provided \$60 million in funding for projects that enhance and improve fisheries, fishing access, habitat, fish passage, and maintain hatcheries through a small surcharge from the sale of fishing licenses. The R&E Fund has been a reliable and consistent funding source and as we look to the future, the need to continually invest in facilities maintenance, improving fish passage, enhancing habitat, maintaining and restoring fish populations, and increasing fishing access will not diminish.

The Legislature reauthorized the R&E Program in 1991, 1997, 2003, and 2009, with the Program currently slated to sunset on December 31, 2019. This bill would remove the sunset date for the Program, and will allow for continued investments in support of Oregon's recreational and commercial fisheries.

Under statute (ORS 496.289) there is a requirement that the R&E Board meet and report to the Fish and Wildlife Commission every 120 days. This requirement creates an unnecessary burden on the Board that results in a meeting schedule that does not align well with the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission schedules, budget cycles, construction timelines, or Board travel schedules. This bill removes the current requirement and provides more flexibility to manage the scheduling and frequency of their meetings to maximize efficiency.

In recent years it has become more difficult to fill all three categories of commercial salmon industry representatives (gillnet, troll, and fish processing) as required in ORS 496.286. This bill broadens the requirements for commercial representation on the Board to ensure that Commercial salmon interests are consistently represented.

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