

PLEASE VOTE NO ON H.B. 2747

H.B. 2747 would change the membership of the State Fish and Wildlife Commission from seven to nine members. Significantly, the bill would *require* the governor to appoint as members of the Fish and Wildlife Commission representatives of the timber industry, commercial fishing and agriculture, hunting interests, and recreational fishing. Only one member is to be chosen from an “environmental or conservation organization”; it is not clear what that means. One member is to represent the Commission on Indian Services.

This is a dramatic change from the current law which simply indicates the governor should consider appointing members with backgrounds “in commercial fishing, recreational fishing, agriculture, forestry and conservation”.

The bill effectively mandates that private industries, logging, commercial fishing and agriculture as well as hunting and fishing interests will control fish and wildlife in Oregon. This bill eviscerates the governor’s authority to set wildlife conservation policy that benefits all Oregonians. In the age of climate change where so much of our wildlife and their habitats are at risk, this bill takes Oregon in the wrong direction.

Under this bill there will be no one on the Commission to represent other Oregonians with interests in wildlife such as non-industry scientists like biologists, forest ecologists, marine biologists, animal behaviorists, ocean experts, climatologists, environmental scientists, conservationists, and the like; experts in rivers, wetlands, and other water resources; experts in wildfires, those who manage local governments with wildlife populations, birders, hikers, campers, photographers and other artists, teachers, bicyclists, and animal advocates.

With only one member allowed from an “environmental or conservation organization”, the Commission and the fate of Oregon’s precious wildlife and fish will be in the hands of industry and hunting and fishing interests, with extraction or profit as their only motive. Our economy, for example, is already suffering from overfishing especially salmon unique to our area. It should be for the governor elected by the people of Oregon to determine the membership of the Fish and Wildlife Commission to assure conservation of our fish and wildlife for the benefit of all Oregonians now and in the future.

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