



To: Members of the House Natural Resources Committee
From: Paige Spence, Oregon Conservation Network
Date: February 19, 2019

RE: Opposition to HB 2747

Chair Witt and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on HB 2747. On behalf of our thousands of members and supporters in Oregon, we would like to register the Oregon Conservation Network's strong opposition to HB 2747.

The Oregon Conservation Network (OCN) is coordinated through the Oregon League of Conservation Voters. OCN is a coalition of 34 not-for-profit organizations throughout the state, united to advocate for pro-conservation legislation and to fight policies that threaten our state's natural legacy. OCN is powered by tens of thousands of Oregonians who belong to their membership organizations, the Oregon Chapter Sierra Club being one. We work to promote policies that will ensure a better Oregon for our children – and to fight policies that do not.

HB 2747, if passed, would prescribe membership on the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission, the citizen-led body charged with overseeing the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. We are actively engaged in discussions around the makeup of the Commission, because two Commissioners term out in June of this year, one Commission seat is open, and one Commissioner is termed out and serving on an extended term.

The conservation community has, over the past two years, been dealt too many blows by a Commission. From voting to abandon the bi-state agreement to phase out gillnetting in the Columbia River, to reversing its decision to uplist the marbled murrelet under the state Endangered Species Act, to withhold protections for the imperiled Humboldt marten, to delisting the Gray Wolf, this Commission has repeatedly has ignored best available science.

While we appreciate that the proponents of this bill also see the oversight Commission to the Department as an important body. However, the Department’s mission “is to protect and enhance Oregon’s fish and wildlife and their habitats for use and enjoyment by present and future generations.”¹ HB 2747 contradicts that mission by proposing that industrial and commercial stakeholders would be in a position of power to steer the Department and supercede the role of ordinary Oregonians. We need Commissioners grounded in science and policy, rather than in special interests.

The Oregon Conservation Network opposes HB 2747 and we urge the members of this Committee to do the same.

Sincerely,

Paige Spence
Oregon Conservation Network Director
Oregon League of Conservation Voters

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¹ <https://www.dfw.state.or.us/agency/>