



HB 2377

Testimony of WaterWatch of Oregon By Kimberley Priestley

**Submitted to the House Committee on Natural Resources
February 28, 2019**

Founded in 1985, WaterWatch is a non-profit river conservation group dedicated to the protection and restoration of natural flows in Oregon's rivers. We work to ensure that enough water is protected in Oregon's rivers to sustain fish, wildlife, recreation and other public uses of Oregon's rivers, lakes and streams. We also work for balanced water laws and policies. WaterWatch has members across Oregon who care deeply about our rivers, their inhabitants and the effects of water laws and policies on these resources.

WaterWatch opposes HB 2377

HB 2377 proposes to grant \$452,390 to Douglas Timber Operators to implement the first phase of a sediment study on the lower Rogue River. In this budget climate, we do not believe that granting money from the General Fund to a private consultant is a prudent investment for the state.

Moreover, the USGS has been doing this work; if more information is needed, it would seem prudent for the state to work with USGS rather than to pay limited General Fund dollars to a private consultant. (see <https://pubs.usgs.gov/of/2011/1280/pdf/ofr20111280.pdf>).

It also strikes us as inappropriate for the state to be giving out large sums of money without a competitive bidding process, especially when it is unclear from the public face of this organization whether they have any experience in the subject matter to be studied.

And finally, it is unclear what the need is. A similar bill failed to pass in 2017 (HB 2496); at that time bill proponents claimed that the sediments were "adversely impacting and limiting the production of Rogue Pacific Salmon species" (see Testimony of Frank Burris, pg. 3 for HB 2496 at <https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2017R1/Downloads/CommitteeMeetingDocument/108684>). Recent data from Oregon State University and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife shows the opposite to be true. The Rogue River is currently experiencing a period of remarkable salmon abundance compared with neighboring rivers (see attachments). Given that, it is unclear what purpose this bill would serve.

We would urge the Committee to vote no on this bill.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

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