



March 13, 2019

House Committee On Natural Resources

Chair Representative Witt, Co-Vice Chairs Representative Gorsek, Representative Sprenger, Members of the Committee.

900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: SUPPORT FOR HB 2829

Chair Witt, Co-Vice Chairs Gorsek and Sprenger, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the approximately 3,000 Oregon members and supporters of American Whitewater, I am writing to encourage the Committee's support and passage of HB 2829 to establish Oregon's Conservation and Recreation Fund.

American Whitewater and its members strongly support the protection of Oregon's rivers and streams including the fish and wildlife resources that depend on healthy waterways. We believe that the work of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, as it relates to the state's Conservation Strategy, must be funded in a way that further enables the protection of habitat, at-risk species and encourages new stewards of our natural landscapes and waterways.

Recreationists of all types play a significant role in protecting Oregon's natural resources; hunting, fishing, bird watching, hiking, mountaineering, skiing, bicycling and paddling all play a role as stewards of our natural resources. It is appropriate that we form a strategy that utilizes the recommendations of HB 2402 (2016): Joint Interim Task Force for Fish, Wildlife and related Outdoor Recreation and Education, to achieve our joint conservation and recreation goals.

Specifically, we hope to see that through the passage of this bill that broad recreation interests are invited to the table, and are encouraged to collaborate in the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Advisory Committee, which is to advise the Fish and Wildlife Commission on Fund expenditures and promote accountability and efficiency. We hope to see that the membership of this committee is inclusive of the many diverse broad stakeholders who have a vested interest in the states recreation resources, and the conservation of those resources, and more specifically we would like to advocate and encourage for representation of whitewater paddling and other non-motorized recreation on this committee.

American Whitewater is also excited to see a pathway to achieving a balance between recreation and conservation outcomes and an opportunity to create meaningful alliances amongst diverse organizations and agencies in the state of Oregon.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2829, and thank you for your service to the state.

Sincerely,

Tom O'Keefe

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