

**From:** [Andy Vobora](#)  
**To:** [JWMNR Exhibits](#)  
**Subject:** SB5510  
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March 7, 2019

Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Natural Resources  
Co-Chairs Taylor and Reardon and Subcommittee Members

Travel Lane County is a non-profit professional organization that has the responsibility, as the destination marketing organization for Lane County, for marketing the Eugene, Cascades & Coast region as a visitor destination. We urge the state to fund the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's budget at a level that maintains operations of the Leaburg Fish Hatchery.

The McKenzie River draws visitors from around the state, across the country and from around the world to kayak, raft, fish, hike, mountain bike and visit attractions like the Leaburg fish hatchery. Visitors are the economic engine that allows guides, outfitters, lodge owners, store owners, restaurants and other businesses to thrive. Therefore, when changes in fish rearing, by the Army Corps of Engineers, changed how the Leaburg Hatchery was and is being used, the affects were immediately noticed by businesses up and down the river. Now facing closure of the hatchery these businesses are left to wonder if they will be viable in the future.

Raising McKenzie River trout is something our guide members feel is critical to the future of their business and Travel Lane County supports finding a solution that will allow this to occur. As important is the need to fund Leaburg Hatchery operations. An estimated 70,000 to 90,000 visits to the hatchery occur each year. These visits result in purchases at businesses up and down the corridor.

The McKenzie River Leaburg Hatchery is a critically important asset in our region and we urge the committee to allocate ODF&W funding sufficient to maintain hatchery operations.

Submitted by Kari Westlund, Travel Lane County President/CEO



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