



March 28, 2019

Dear Chair Witt and Members of the House Natural Resource Committee,

I am writing to express Audubon Society of Portland's opposition to HB 2747 as introduced and to the -2 amendments. We appreciate the invitation from Representative Barreto to participate in a workgroup on this legislation but unfortunately were unable to participate due to prior commitments. However, we continue to believe that the current system for allocating representation on the ODFW Commission based on congressional districts plus one at-large representative from east of the Cascades and one at-large representative from west of the Cascades is the fairest way to distribute representation.

We believe that it makes more sense to base representation primarily on population rather than geography— basing representation primarily on geography as proposed in the -2 amendments would result in significant overrepresentation of areas with relatively small populations. While no system is perfect, we would view this as a significant step in the wrong direction for the ODFW Commission. Demographics are shifting significantly in Oregon and it is important that the ODFW Commission represent those changing demographics, especially if ODFW is to maintain and grow its existing base of support.

We also continue to strongly oppose tying ODFW Commission positions to specific special interests as was proposed in HB 2747 as introduced and which is perpetuated in the -2 amendments. The existing statutory language already requires the following:

All members of the commission shall have a general knowledge of fish and wildlife issues and an understanding of the operation and functions of public policy boards and commissions. In making appointments to the commission, the Governor shall consider appointing members who possess natural resource backgrounds such as backgrounds in commercial fishing, recreational fishing, hunting, agriculture, forestry and conservation.

We view this existing language to be adequate to ensure that the Governor gives due consideration to the types of expertise that are needed on the ODFW Commission while at the same time allowing for flexibility. We see no basis on which to single out agricultural interests and hunting and fishing permit holders as proposed in the -2 amendments relative to myriad other stakeholder interests with a vested interest in the protection and management of Oregon's fish and wildlife populations.

We respectfully urge you to not move HB 4707, either as introduced or as amended, forward.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Bob Sallinger
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Audubon Society of Portland