



Testimony to the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee on HB 3150

David Moskowitz, Executive Director on March 18, 2021

The Conservation Angler opposes HB 3150 and urges no further consideration by the Committee.

The Conservation Angler is a wild fish and wild river conservation organization. TCA believes that management actions should prioritize wild fish for their resilience, natural productivity and genetic diversity benefits which will provide the most cost effective and ecosystem-effective path towards a sustainable future and resilience in the face of climate change forces.

Sadly, HB 3150 would have Oregon returning to an archaic, unproven and short-sighted technological fix to raise and release maladapted salmonids and that flies in the face of the very habitat restoration efforts that creates the natural ecosystem productivity to which wild animals have adapted to survive in over thousands of years.

TCA appreciates that the proponents only want to help Oregon's wild salmonids – but this is a helping hand that wild fish do not need and which will more than likely further depress the natural productivity inherent in wild fish.

Ten Reasons that incubation and hatch-boxes do not work:

1. The incubation fish are not marked – therefore they do not provide harvest opportunities in any fishery where only marked hatchery fish may be retained.
2. Incubation boxes and hatch-boxes release hatchery-collected juvenile fish that will not even survive as well as traditional hatchery-raised juveniles as they are unprotected for a vast majority of their freshwater phase – thereby vastly diminishing their contribution.
3. The fish are not marked – therefore there is no ability to track their survival after release nor if they actually survive to the returning adult stage.
4. There is little if any scientific evidence that shows any positive results of any incubation or hatch-box releases – this is only partially because these fish are unmarked and cannot be distinguished from other salmonids.
5. Incubation or hatch-box released fish will not survive in the south coast area as they will face the same lack of juvenile rearing habitat that currently limits salmon and steelhead productivity.
6. These unmarked hatchery juveniles will interfere with wild salmonids that exist in the same watersheds – as the mass-releases will create rearing and food competition with wild fish.
7. These unmarked juvenile releases will attract more predators to the streams in which they are located, also increasing predation on other salmonids already in the stream.
8. Raising and releasing fish in incubators and hatch-boxes may add additional strain to the ocean food web which is already limited by an existing decline in productivity which is evident in the low returns of current hatchery broodstocks and wild fish alike.
9. These are NOT “wild” fish simply because they are not in a traditional hatchery. The program relies on incubated eggs taken at a hatchery – this activity skips what is perhaps the most important selective advantage for wild fish – and that is mate selection – which is completely ignored by hatchery broodstock practices.
10. Oregon coastal coho are ESA-listed and hatchery programs must be created and evaluated in a Hatchery Genetic Management Plan (HGMP) that is approved by NOAA-Fisheries. ODFW has rather successfully modified Oregon's hatchery coho programs, and together with harvest reforms as well as habitat restoration and protection as well as re-opened stream access – have led to an improving situation. Coho hatch-box fish will complicate and likely depress these other efforts.

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