



Date: March 18, 2021

To: Representative Witt and House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources

From: Dr. Tim Elder - Wild Salmon Center

Re: Wild Salmon Center STRONGLY OPPOSES HB 3150

Dear Chair Witt, Vice-Chairs Breese-Iverson and Hudson, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony regarding House Bill 3150. Wild Salmon Center strongly opposes the proposed legislation which would direct the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to install and operate salmon hatch boxes in Southern Oregon waterways.

We appreciate that much of the support for this bill comes from a goal that we all share – abundant salmon populations that provide ample opportunities for harvest. Unfortunately, overwhelming scientific research indicates that the kind of hatchery boxes funded by the bill have a high chance of negatively affecting wild salmon populations.

There are several major problems with hatch box rearing of salmonids, including the following:

- a) rapid accumulation of deleterious traits, resulting from artificial rearing and domestication selection, negatively affect wild populations that reproduce with returning hatch box fish.
- b) the potential to adversely impact salmonid populations listed under the Endangered Species Act.
- c) hatch box fish undermine the ability of ODFW to conduct and manage an adult mark-selective fishery that many anglers rely upon.
- d) negative effects on naturally produced wild fish populations due to increased freshwater competition, predation, disease transmission and genetic impacts to wild salmonids; and
- e) low survival from egg to adult, due to freshwater habitat limitations and high mortality rates of hatch box fish, makes the cost of initiating, operating and maintaining hatch boxes far exceed the return on investment.

HB 3150 also threatens to undermine local salmon restoration planning efforts that are currently underway and involve local, state, and federal stakeholders. The Rogue/South Coast Multispecies Conservation and Management Plan (RSP) that ODFW has been conducting over the last two years included an intensive stakeholder process that discussed the use of hatch boxes in Southern Oregon coastal waterways and identified areas to be managed as wild fish and mixed fish (wild and hatchery) emphasis areas. This legislation will effectively circumvent and disrupt stakeholder and ODFW consensus agreements regarding wild fish emphasis areas and hatchery management discussions that developed through this collaborative conservation and management plan.

INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

721 NW Ninth Avenue, Suite 300 • Portland, Oregon 97209 USA • tel: 503.222.1804 • fax: 503.222.1805

info@wildsalmoncenter.org • www.wildsalmoncenter.org

Wild Salmon Center appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to HB 3150 and would be happy to supply the Committee with the relevant scientific literature regarding the negative effects that hatchery fish pose on wild populations of salmonids.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Elder", written in a cursive style.

Dr. Tim Elder
Southwest Oregon Program Manager