

It is with a deep commitment to deserving military veterans with disabilities that I support this proposed bill to authorize issuance of group licenses for angling or shellfish to nonprofit organizations serving veterans or certain armed forces members. As the Portland Program Lead for Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing, INC., I have worked with military veterans and active duty military personnel with disabilities under the mission of this organization for the past 13 years.

Simply stated, PHWFF, INC., is dedicated to the physical and emotional rehabilitation of disabled active military service personnel and disabled veterans through fly fishing and associated activities including education and outings. In each year of this program's activity I have had to budget for and coordinate the licensing of deserving participants in our program. The costs include the price of the day license, the time and effort to purchase licenses and distribute them to those attending our outings in Oregon who need the license and manage the administrative tasks associated with state requirements and organizational needs.

As one of 6 active Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing, INC., programs in Oregon the Portland program conducts, in non-pandemic years, as many as 10-12 outings in the waters of Oregon where licensing is required. Each of the programs in Oregon has similar outing schedules and has the same administrative, budget and logistical challenges. Most of the participants in our programs are eager to purchase their own licenses only after they have learned to fly fish and seen the therapeutic benefits of the activities, so we do not require licenses for all participants at each outing. It is simply a matter of providing the access for beginners and those who have financial limitations who wish to learn and benefit from our efforts.

It is worth noting that participants in our program are eligible for a group license if fishing in Washington State under their regulations governing non profit programs like ours.

While this is initially a small revenue cost to the state, most of the participants in our program who live and fish in Oregon purchase annual licenses once we have trained and outfitted them appropriately to fly fish in the state. With the training the participants are encouraged to fish outside of program-organized events with appropriate licensing requirements met.

Rest assured that the participants are clearly deserving of this kind of support for having served in the United States military and having a disability as a result. The therapeutic benefits, physical and mental, are brought to these individuals through generous donations from individuals and corporations who wish to show support and gratitude for the sacrifices made in service to our country.

Please accept this as my statement in of support of this bill and as the voice of one of the 6 programs in Oregon that serve deserving veterans and active duty military individuals with disabilities to overcome and rehabilitate in the outdoors. Oregon offers unique opportunities in some of the most spectacular settings in the world. This legislation will multiply the opportunities that can be enjoyed by those who deserve it without question.

I greatly appreciate the opportunity to speak in support of this legislation.