



## **The Conservation Angler is opposed to HB 2067 as written**

HB 2067 is not good policy as it allows the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to reduce their Other Fund (OF) revenues based on short-term decision-making which may place revenue pressure on the General Fund. This could result in using the General Fund to fund programs that should be funded by license dollars such as ODFW hatcheries that are currently funded by OF revenues. The Conservation Angler is opposed to the use of General Fund for hatchery acquisition, operations, or maintenance.

If ODFW wishes to incentivize the purchase of licenses, they should propose a specific plan showing stable revenue streams designed to fund current operations. ODFW is assuming, without any data, that the increase in license buying during the past year which saw high levels of COVID-19-related outdoor recreation across Oregon, will continue at high rates – and they conclude that lowering the price for these license products will incentivize repeat license purchases without knowing if price is the driving factor behind the purchase in the first place. Price is not the only factor in license buying as demographics, weather, quality opportunity and macro-economic factors all play a role in personal license buying activity.

ODFW should advocate for the specific proposals they want to incentivize anglers or hunters so there are predictable revenue streams. Giving ODFW permanent and full authority to reduce fees is just a bad idea when it translates to General Fund impacts over which they have no authority. Why would the Legislature provide the Fish & Wildlife Commission this authority and flexibility without analysis and a plan? ODFW should not have the authority to lower license fees without a broader review of the context in relationship to the overall budget.

Further, the decrease in license fees for the daily angling and shellfish products is billed as something of a support for charter fishing and guides on the coast – why is Oregon subsidizing these industries?

HB 2067 should at a minimum receive a referral to the Natural Resources Sub-Committee on Ways and Means so its implications can be analyzed in context with the agency's entire budget.

If the Committee wants to move HB 2067, it should be amended to make it clear that any license revenue shortfalls as a result of fee reductions could not be backfilled with general funds. It could also limit the exemption ONLY for daily licenses.

Another troubling factor with HB 2067 is that it also restructures the partial dedication of the one-day angling and shellfish fees to several ODFW Programs - the Oregon Hatchery Research Center Fund – the Fish Passage Task Force and the Fish Screening Program. The current percentage dedicated from various licenses to these programs is a set amount and that figure has not kept up with the costs to administer these programs. ODFW is being asked to do more with less – so why would the Legislature allow fee reductions without a corresponding increase in the percentages allocated to these programs?

Without serious changes, HB 2067 will further undermine mission-critical programs only to subsidize a subset of coastal businesses while putting critical agency needs in danger by removing a necessary and stable revenue source. The primary reason for HB 2067 seems to be to maximize ODFW's "R3 Program" of recruitment, reactivation and retention of hunters and anglers - but without regard to impact on the agency's core functions.

The Conservation Angler urges that HB 2067 be referred to Ways and Means or simply deferred to another Legislative Session so that the larger, unresolved fee structure and function problems be addressed.

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