

Submitter: Benjamin Haren  
On Behalf Of: The Oregon Hunters Association  
Committee: House Committee On Rules  
Measure: HJR5

Dear Chair Fahey, Vice-chairs Breese-Iverson and Kropf and Members of the Committee,

The notion that something can be a “right” is a powerful idea. The mere observance that certain aspects of our humanity can even be considered rights has undeniably served as the motivation to form any sort of government in the first place. To create to a body of people whose purpose is to protect and preserve those rights is still a relatively new experiment in the history of our species as a whole. However, the subject matter at hand is not a new phase in our timeline of existence. It is in fact an aspect of what makes us who we are. It is a trait of ours that has accompanied us up to present modernity. It is painfully ironic that such a new human notion of determining rights is now being used to examine a fundamental aspect of what brought us to this point. Hunting and gathering extends beyond the mere of notion of a right.

An argument can definitely be made that Oregonians have a right to self-sustainability. Although I agree with that whole-heartedly, I feel that this argument goes fundamentally deeper than that.

The right to hunt and forage could more easily be described as the right to be human. Hunting and foraging is an activity that we have practiced since the dawn of our existence. The opponents to this idea may point to other aspects of our humanity that have been replaced by the availability of modern convenience. I feel that this argument is a weak one. There are few elements of humanity that a modern solution could not systematize or make more efficient. With astounding accuracy, modern medicine can almost guarantee pregnancy. Simply stated, because an alternative solution exists to replace an aspect of our human behavior, does not necessarily mean we should shed that aspect of our past in favor of the modern alternative. No one is proposing that all humans who can pro-create naturally abstain from doing so simply because a more efficient means with higher certainty of success exists. The same can be said with agriculture. Simply because alternative means of gathering food exist does not mean we should forfeit this intrinsic aspect of our past. Grabbing a package of ground beef wrapped in plastic plucked from the aisle of a fluorescent lit aisle of a grocery store does not—and never will—replace harvesting one’s protein in some of our last remaining wild places.

If we do not recognize that hunting and gathering is a fundamental right that is inextricably tied to what makes us all humans, the wild places in which that endeavor is practiced will undoubtedly be re-purposed to suit the needs of those who do not care or are simply indifferent to the idea.

Therefore, hunting and gathering is and always should be considered a right.

Regards,

Benjamin Haren (Sherwood)