



WaterWatch of Oregon

Protecting Natural Flows In Oregon Rivers

SB 5509 ODFW BUDGET

Testimony of WaterWatch of Oregon

By Kimberley Priestley

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Founded in 1985, WaterWatch is a non-profit river conservation group dedicated to the protection and restoration of natural flows in Oregon's rivers. We work to ensure that enough water is protected in Oregon's rivers and aquifers to sustain fish, wildlife, recreation and other public uses of Oregon's rivers, lakes, wetlands, groundwater dependent ecosystems and streams. We also work for balanced water laws and policies. WaterWatch has members across Oregon who care deeply about our rivers, their inhabitants and the effects of water laws and policies on these resources.

ODFW's Water Quality and Water Quantity Program: ODFW's Water Program plays a vital role in protecting water in our state's iconic rivers. Adequate funding of ODFW's Water Program is critical to meeting the many instream recommendations of the state's Integrated Water Resources Strategy. Whether it's working to protect water instream, prioritizing streamflow restoration efforts statewide, working in basin collaborative groups, helping develop water policy or working with OWRD to solve complex regional water issues, To support this work we are respectfully requesting the following of the Legislature:

- **Protect ODFW's Water Program from cuts:** With climate change upon us, the work of this program is more important than ever. Please protect it from cuts.
- **Fund ODFW POP 107, Integrated Water Solutions:** Policy Option Package 107 would fund 3 ODFW positions to work on Integrated Water Resources Solutions, including Place Based Planning and other regional collaboratives. Without ODFW participation in regional water forums, regional plans will be severely compromised, and risk not meeting statutory standards to meet instream needs.
- **Fund ODFW POP 110, Statewide Stream Temperature Modeling:** POP 110 is critical to understanding stream temperatures and how they affect Oregon's iconic species, including federally listed salmon and steelhead.

Conclusion: Eighteen out of nineteen of Oregon's river basins are already over appropriated from the late spring to the early fall. At the same time, population growth and climate change are increasing pressures on Oregon's rivers and other aquatic habitats. Oregon's fish and other aquatic species across the state are imperiled; climate change will only make the challenges Oregon's aquatic species are facing worse. In the face of these increasing pressures, protection of Oregon's iconic fish and wildlife, and the habitats they depend on, is more important than ever. As such we would urge the Ways and Means Committee to protect the Water Program from cuts a further invest in these POPS.

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