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TO ENCOURAGE FLY FISHING  
AS A METHOD OF ANGLING

March 23, 2023

Representative Ken Helm, Chair of the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, and Water  
900 Court St. NE Salem, Oregon 97301

**RE: HB 3232, Relating to commercial fishing methods.**

Members of the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, and Water,

On behalf of the McKenzie Flyfishers, I am writing in support HB 3232. We are an Oregon organization of over 100 members with strong interests and histories in both fishing and in fish conservation. As such, we can empathize with the interests of both fishermen and conservationists, where there can sometimes be tensions. When possible and reasonable, we support solutions where all partys' interests can be largely met. That preference notwithstanding, when we are confronted with a situation where the continued existence of an endangered or threatened fish population is at serious risk, the scales must tip decidedly in the favor of conservation. In the present case, we believe that the potential fish conservation benefits that would be conferred by enactment of HB 3232 strongly outweigh the potential downsides. The growth in use of alternative, selective fishing gears is likely to happen slowly; allowing time for adaptation, and hopefully adoption, by harvesters.

Our interests here are not merely abstract. Our namesake river, the McKenzie, is one of the last bastions of upper Willamette Basin spring Chinook salmon. Yet this population itself is listed as threatened with extinction under the Endangered Species Act. For decades we have worked to protect and recover this population, via support of sport fishing regulations, development of fish passage at dams, restoration of spawning habitat, and reformation of hatchery practices. The initiation of hatchery salmon marking by fin clipping at the turn of the century, coupled with new regulations requiring release of all sport-caught wild salmon, is a step that we applauded and continue to support.

The gaping hole in the marked salmon program is that non-selective harvest fishing in the ocean and in the Columbia River is allowed. Thus wild salmon—some of them born in and on their way to the McKenzie River—are killed right along with hatchery salmon. They never get a chance to reproduce and potentially recover the population, for everyone's benefit, in their home river. Now that selective harvest fishing methods have been proven to be effective, their greater use should be encouraged, not limited. These methods will eventually benefit everyone, allowing

the season for hatchery salmon harvest to be extended as wild fish bycatch drops, and thus a greater number of hatchery salmon to be harvested.

Therefore we strongly encourage the Committee to pass HB 3232.

Sincerely,

Jeff Devore  
President, McKenzie Flyfishers