



March 22, 2023

Representative Ken Helm, Chair
Representative Annessa Hartman, Vice-Chair
Representative Mark Owens, Vice-Chair
House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Re: NFS opposes HB 3086 as introduced; supports amendment to maintain congressional districts

Chair Helm, Vice-Chair Hartman, Vice-Chair Owens and Members of the Committee,

Native Fish Society¹ urges the committee to continue a Fish and Wildlife Commission structure based on proportional representation by congressional district as proposed in the -1 amendment for HB 3086.² Maintaining selection from congressional districts is the most streamlined, straightforward, practical, and effective way to update the authorizing legislation for the commission.

NFS and our supporters engage often with the Commission and its decision-making processes. Commissioners must dig deeply into a broad suite of issues that cross both political and ecological boundaries. They are tasked with making decisions that impact not only species, but people and places. At its heart, the commission's purpose is to represent the people of the state in executing the mission of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. And that mission is to protect and enhance Oregon's fish and wildlife and their habitats for use and enjoyment by not only present, but future generations as well.

We believe that selecting commissioners from each congressional district has the best chance at creating a commission that is diverse in terms of geography, demographics, and applicable skills and knowledge. We also endorse the language in the -1 amendment which streamlines the qualifications for commissioners to have "knowledge or experience relevant to implementing the wildlife policy described in" statute.

While we disagree that the at-large seat should include a vague qualifier regarding geographic consideration, we support the -1 amendment as a reasonable compromise and streamlined method of updating the Commission's authorizing legislation and urge the committee to move forward with amendment to HB 3086 to maintain selection from congressional districts.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Fairbrother
Conservation Director

¹ The Native Fish Society is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit with a mission to restore abundant wild fish, free-flowing rivers, and thriving local communities across Oregon and the Pacific Northwest.

² We are aware that additional -3 and -4 amendments have been proposed and posted to the record today. As we haven't had time to fully review and consider these additional amendments, our comments pertain to what was previously available. We may provide supplemental written testimony once we have had an opportunity to review the additional amendments proposed.