

Submitter: Frank Burris

On Behalf Of: HB2206

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Measure: HB2206

#### Testimony on Salmon Credits Bill (HB2206)

In my almost 30 years of working to restore salmonid habitat in both the Pacific Northwest and Alaska, I have found that there are two persistent problems that limit restoration of salmon habitat (riparian areas, wetlands, and estuaries) on private land in Oregon. The first is that high value restorable habitats are mostly found on private lands and landowners are hesitant to incur the costs of restoration. Additionally, they are often unwilling or unable to bear the opportunity costs of not being able to use those lands for agriculture, forestry, and grazing. The second problem is that restoration of critical habitat often occurs in very dynamic locations that usually require long-term adaptive management to insure that these newly restored habitats meet their management goals. The few grants that are available to conduct restoration are highly competitive and usually too short-term to affect significant and effective habitat restoration and long-term management of these habitats. As a result, salmon habitats are degraded and salmon populations are declining throughout the Pacific Northwest. The system of Salmon Credits proposed in HB2206 solves both of these problems.

Private landowners will be much more likely to trade their use of lands, that are often marginally useful due to seasonal or tidal inundation or erosion, if there are more available sources of restoration dollars, and funding for long-term management of those lands. Long-term funding will allow conservation groups to work with landowners to restore exceptional salmon producing habitats and have the funding to make sure that those habitats continue to improve over time. Landowners want to contribute to the restoration of salmon populations and just need a monetary incentive so that they are not incurring a private cost for habitats which enhance a public good.

I believe the passage of HB2206 will result in a system that will incentivize private landowners to restore valuable salmon habitat, and serve as a model structure that will stem the decline of salmonids throughout the Pacific Northwest. I urge you to support HB2206 so Oregon can become a leader in effective public/private partnerships that can restore salmon habitat and thereby insure the continuation of abundant salmon populations for our children and theirs to come.

Thank you,  
Frank Burris

OSU Watershed Management Educator (retired)