



**OREGON  
WILD**

Protecting Oregon's wildlands, wildlife, and waters since 1974.

Date: May 23, 2023

To: House Committee on Rules

RE: **HB 3086 - State Fish and Wildlife Commission Structure**

---

Chair Fahey and members of the Committee,

My name is Danielle Moser and I am the Wildlife Program Manager for Oregon Wild - a conservation organization with 20,000 members and supporters from across the state.

I urge you to oppose HB 3086, including the -7 and -8 amendments.

The model being proposed in this bill is derived from the current Water Resources Commission structure.

However, it's important to note that in the 1990s the legislature changed the structure of the Oregon Water Resources Commission from proportional representation via Congressional districts to an irrigation-watershed model based on water availability and water usage. The natural resources industry groups who pushed this model at the time were overtly and strongly anti-conservation - explicit in their argument that the goal was to ultimately limit the influence of conservation voices, and the majority, in water resource decisions.

This is a troubling precedent and one that should not be adopted for the Fish and Wildlife Commission.

Furthermore, while a river basin model might seem more logical for ODFW, this particular water resources structure has no biological or ecological significance for the conservation and management of Oregon's fish and wildlife.

All Oregonians deserve to have their voices heard when it comes to ensuring we have thriving, abundant wildlife and habitat for generations to come - especially as we tackle major environmental crises such as climate change and biodiversity loss.

That's why Oregon Wild advocates for a Fish and Wildlife Commission based on proportional representation to ensure that the public interest in fish, wildlife, and habitat will remain represented equitably.

The commission is not meant to be a board of experts on regional ecology or policy. It is meant to be a voice for the people in providing oversight to agency actions and providing regulatory decision-making within the confines of state law. It's the agency that provides regional expertise. ODFW staff have a presence all across Oregon, conduct monitoring all over the state, and hold meetings everywhere in the state.

The congressional district model was instituted to ensure the public interest would, in fact, be proportionally represented. Maintaining a structure based on people is critical to allow for the broadest candidate pool proportionate to population, to ensure the commission reflects the changing demographics of the state, and to make sure the voices of the majority aren't diluted.

Thank you.