



Bluebacks Trout Unlimited Chapter #196
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February 7, 2024

Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire

Re: Opposition to Senate Bill 1590 (Roll-Back of Towed Watersports Program)

Dear Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Girod, and Members of the Committee,

Trout Unlimited (TU) is a national organization dedicated to caring for rivers and streams so our children can experience the joy of wild and native trout and salmon. Our chapter of Trout Unlimited, the Bluebacks, has members in the Mid-Willamette Valley from Salem to Eugene, and from the Cascades to the ocean. Our volunteers conduct anadromous fish surveys on the North Santiam River, monitor water chemistry in Corvallis area streams, clean trash from the South Santiam, and participate in youth education about salmonids (i.e., Linn-Benton Salmon Watch). These projects all focus on tributaries of the Willamette River and we are deeply concerned about the ecosystem health of the Willamette.

The Blueback Chapter of Trout Unlimited opposes Senate Bill 1590.

The anadromous fish in the rivers and streams that our chapter cares for depend on a healthy Willamette River through which they must migrate. Both as fishers for salmon and steelhead and people dedicated to sustaining the diversity of the place where we live, our membership recognizes the importance of these species as an essential part of our ecosystem. Furthermore, these fish are emblematic of the Pacific Northwest, and have been so for millennia. Rebuilding their abundance in the Willamette River watershed is a high priority for our chapter.

The existing “towed watersports” program is a reasonable regulatory framework that guards against certain recreational boating activities that have negative effects on native fish and water quality in the Willamette Valley. The Bluebacks oppose this bill because it would unwind that functioning and reasonable program. We ask the Committee to not move it this session.

Thank you for considering our input. Please contact me if I can answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Frederick Colwell, current President
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