



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF OREGON**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 97-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

March 28, 2017

To: Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources  
Senator Lew Frederick and Representative Brad Witt, Co-Chairs  
Email: [jwmnr.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:jwmnr.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov)

Re: HB 5010, Oregon Fish and Wildlife Department Budget (ODFW) - COMMENTS

The League of Women Voters believes that natural resources should be managed as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems. The League supports the mission of the Department “To protect and enhance Oregon's fish and wildlife and their habitats for use and enjoyment by present and future generations.” We believe that this agency plays a role in assuring abundant clean water for all, the goal of the Integrated Water Resources Strategy. We believe that climate change will affect Oregon’s fish and wildlife and their habitats. Therefore, **ODFW must be funded not only with extractive fees and licenses, but by monies provided by the general public.**

The League was privileged to be a part of the work group that helped draft HB 2402 (2015) and attended many of the bill’s Task Force meetings. We are also a member of the agency’s External Budget Advisory Committee meetings. We listened and learned from other stakeholders about the services provided by the department in a wide variety of areas. Although we are not fond of fee increases, we accepted the need in 2015 in order for the department to provide the services required for our hunting and fishing population. We worked together to design the increases in a way to try to keep out-of-Oregon participants coming to Oregon, while being sure Oregonians also can continue to participate, all the while remembering our goal of keeping the important services these fees provide to these constituencies. The restructure of those fees seems to have worked. We are pleased to see the increase in sales. Perhaps the year-long discussion around those increases helped the general public better understand their role in this important agency’s work.

However, we also believe the General Fund has a responsibility related to the general public’s interests. As we have said with other natural resource agency budgets: **We need more revenue.** But, even with that restraint, there are General Fund investments that must occur. **We support fully funding the original POP 108 to continue implementation of the Integrated Water Resources Strategy.** We link this POP with the programs you will hear about in the Water Resources Department’s budget in the near future. Again, the work of these agencies have interrelated duties and should not be reviewed in silos.

We had hoped that the HB 2402 Task Force would have clearly recommended a funding source for the Oregon Conservation Strategy—a plan that has never been funded to a level for which it could be implemented. We were intrigued by the proposal to charge a sales tax on beverages sold under the bottle bill law; in fact, **a 5% charge at the distributor level would provide**

**dollars that could be used by ALL the natural resource agencies to begin to adequately fund these agencies on behalf of all Oregonians.**

We were supportive of HB 3315 (2015) and are looking forward to the data to be released on the first six months of this project. We believe that the greater good for this project is better understanding by management of the various demands made of agency staff. After all, any actual billing to other state agencies will simply move the monetary demand from one agency to another—it doesn't provide new money for the services needed—unless the Legislature is willing to increase permit fees in those agencies for the work being done by ODFW staff. Recently, the contract work done at DEQ regarding their wastewater permitting staff demonstrated how staff is pulled in too many directions. DEQ leadership has now instigated a reorganization and prioritization of staffing time.

The League supported the designation of marine reserves and protected areas along our coast. The on-going studies of those areas by ODFW scientists are critical to knowing their value and how best to manage ocean aquatic populations. We are also concerned by ocean acidification and its effect on our important shellfish industry. And algae blooms in our state waters are increasing, in part due to changing temperatures. ODFW has a role in all these issues.

**To be clear, we support the ODFW scientists and their job to assure our fish and wildlife are protected for future generations. We believe ODFW scientists have a very important role in assuring abundant clean water for all. We believe that fishers and hunters have a role in funding this agency, but the General Fund—the people's money—should also contribute.**

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.



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