

WITNESS REGISTRATION

Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission

June 5-6, 2014, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Salem, Oregon

EXHIBIT G

PUBLIC HEARING ON: EXHIBIT G: 2015-2017 Proposed Agency Budget

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Exhibit G - Public Testimony

June 5, 2014 Testimony to the ODFW Commission

Chair Levy, Commissioners, Director Elicker and the ODFW staff.

For the record, my name is Blaine Ackley. I live in Hillsboro, Oregon and both my wife and I are Oregon Sport Fishermen. We fish for salmon in the Columbia River, the Pacific Ocean and on many Oregon coastal bays and rivers.

Thank you for this opportunity to address my concerns about the fishing license fees and the proposed budget. I also want to thank Director Elicker and the ODFW staff for holding the public meetings to gather public comments about the budget.

I fully support charging the Pioneers a small fee for their license because that action alone will bring more federal support money to the budget. I also support the \$ 10.00 juvenile license because that allows families to hunt and fish. Shifting funding of the non-game wildlife to the general fund makes good sense because the non-game program benefits all Oregonians. I also support shifting more of the OSP funding back to the general fund to make it a 50/50 contribution. I like the idea of the multi-year license that preserves the current year's fee for up to three years in the future. The unique fish opportunity raffle is an idea worth further exploration too.

On the other hand, some specific fee increases need a more thoughtful and reasoned approach. Research demonstrates that any time you increase a fee, participation will drop for three to five years depending on the size of the increase. At the public hearing I attended, Director Elicker mentioned that there was an economic model that was able to forecast the reduced participation and consequent loss of revenue. I do not see that the model is able to predict an increase in poaching that might result from a fee increase. There is no increase in funding for the enforcement portion of the budget. This is a missing piece of this budget in my view.

If you raise a fee and you can demonstrate to prospective license holders that there will be increased opportunities or that the fee will go to conservation or protection of the resource, most people can accept a

fee increase. However, when there is a new fee with the funds just going off into the big ODFW budget pie, sportsmen begin to have doubts. For example, we have the new Columbia River endorsement that will provide funding to transition into an allocation in favor of recreational anglers. Thanks and good for you in taking action but then you gave us the barbless hook rule and the Young's Bay Control Zone with no research to support either proposal. So we anglers tend to view any new or increased fees, licenses, or tags with a healthy bit of skepticism.

Another new license on the table is the ocean endorsement. Where will this money go? How will it benefit anglers? So if I fish in the ocean for anything, I will have another \$10.00 fee. With the Columbia River fee of \$10.00 and the increase in the fishing license of \$5.00, this looks more like a \$ 25.00 or 75% fee increase to me.

If you are going to increase the fees for many recreational fishermen by 75%, I would like to see a similar increase for the fees that commercial fisherman pay.

Switching gears, let's look at the participation side of the equation because we can all agree that if we increase participation, there would be less of a need for a fee increase. In fact, the state of New York in February of this year reduced their fishing license fee in order to attract new participants. Let me say that again, New York REDUCED license fees in order to attract new participants. Depending on what data source you use, Oregon fishing and hunting license fees are among the top five highest in the nation. I think the usual and simplistic response to a budget shortfall is to increase the fees, cut programs, and shift funds within the budget but a more creative response is necessary.

We all live and work in a market based economy so I would like to see the department use a more market-based approach to selling licenses and endorsements. First of all, use referrals of current license holders to reduce the cost of their licenses in future years. If I take my non-license holder buddy into get a license, then I will get some reduction in my license for the upcoming year.

Secondly, use incentives for the retail vendors to sell more licenses based on previous sales, the department could set sales goals for each

vendor. If the vendor exceeded the goal of increased license sales, the vendor would get a sales bonus of some amount.

The department could use the same system with guides. Guides are in a unique position because they come into contact with non-license holders. If the client is interested in more fishing or hunting, the guide could refer the client to purchase a yearly license and tags and receive some direct credit for doing it.

Finally, more marketing and coordination with state agencies and vendors using sales incentives could increase sales of the Habitat Conservations Stamps. Connect with the Audubon Society and other conservation groups to promote and encourage stamp sales. Let the Oregon Park Department campground offices have the stamps available for sale. Let ODOT sell the stamps along with their popular snow park permits.

Thank you for allowing me time to address these issues. Just like you, I want the ODFW to have the resources necessary to succeed in protecting and conserving the resources we have in our state. I think more creative thinking is necessary in a budget shortfall than the simple answers of cutting programs and raising fees. The current proposal has some good features and now let's add a mix of creative market-based approaches to the recipe. After all, this is Oregon and we can do better than this.

Sincerely yours,

Blaine C. Ackley
655 NW 229th Ave.
Hillsboro, OR 97124

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Blaine C. Ackley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Exhibit G - June 5, 2014
Public Testimony



UNLIMITED

Oregon Council Trout Unlimited

June 4-

Chair Levy, ODFW Commissioners and Director Elicker.

For the record, my name is Tom Wolf, Executive director of the Oregon Council Trout Unlimited. I am here today representing the 3000 members of Trout Unlimited here in Oregon to voice our support and thoughts on ODFW's proposed 2015-2017 budget.

You have received and hopefully had a chance to read Trout Unlimited's comments on the proposed budget. I am not going to repeat most of what was stated in that document. TU supports the proposed license fee increases, the increase in general funds part of the budget and more special fees such as the wild bird seed tax proposal. We also support ODFW's cost cutting efficiencies. TU thinks that any innovative approach possible to keep ODFW focused on its mission and financially able to accomplish its mission should be used. And Trout Unlimited stands ready to help in any way possible.

There are however two points I would like to mention at this time that Trout Unlimited has concern about. The first is the reduction of conservation and field staff. Part of that is getting rid of 6 Assistant District Biologists. This would severely limit the ability of ODFW to do conservation projects in these districts. These Assistant DB's are the people who our TU volunteers work with in projects that benefit wild fish. These positions, as well as conservation staff, should not be eliminated.

Which leads to point number 2-that there are ways to eliminate, cut waste, use more volunteers and consolidate positions in the hatchery program. For example you can look at your high lakes program and cut wasteful practices-such as dumping trout in too shallow or iced over lakes- which TU volunteers has noted and pointed out. Nonproductive programs can be eliminated, willing volunteers can help, hatcheries can be combined (as ODFW has already done in a few cases) and many other wasteful practices can be eliminated. I am not saying get rid of hatchery programs. I like fishing in high lakes (my fly rod is always in my pack when I go backpacking) and after spending a few days fishing at Lava lake, I saw the economic and recreation impact of the crowded but fun fishery. I am just saying that hatchery programs can be looked at to cut waste and get rid of unnecessary programs so key and necessary field

staff can be kept and numbers possibly be increased, so that that they can do vital conservation tasks in order to protect and restore native wild species.

In closing, I just want to note that the ODFW staff should be commended for the excellent way they have worked in this whole budget proposal cycle. The EBAC process-which is the best I have ever been involved in- was done in a very competent manner. There are of course ways the process can be improved but it was a more productive time then we have ever had. ODFW staff decisions on diversification of funding, cutting programs, etc. is well done. Concerns Trout Unlimited has are noted in previous comments we have submitted and in words I have spoken today. TU members, such as myself, love to hunt and fish in our beautiful state and we care about the recovery of wild native salmonids and their habitat. TU wants ODFW to be fully funded to do its mission of conservation and we stand ready to assist in any way we can. Now we just need to push forward to make this happen.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tom Wolf". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Tom Wolf, Executive Director

Oregon Council Trout Unlimited