

Exhibit C
**Update on Columbia River Harvest
Reform Transition Period**

Supplemental Public Correspondence

**Public correspondence received
as of March 18, 2016**

FRED GIROD
STATE SENATOR

DISTRICT 9
Portions of Marion, Linn and Clackamas County



OREGON STATE SENATE
900 COURT ST NE
SALEM, OR 97301

March 14, 2016

Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission
4034 Fairview Industrial Drive SE
Salem, OR 97302

Chair Finley and Commissioners,

In 2013 the Oregon Legislature passed Senate Bill 830 to enact key components of the Columbia River Fish Management reforms adopted by Oregon and Washington to optimize the economic and conservation benefits of Columbia River salmon fisheries. As supporters of this legislation and the compromise fishery reforms, we urge the Commission to continue implementing this common sense plan.

As you know, for years the management of Columbia River salmon fisheries has been marked by conflict and controversy. The bi-state Columbia River reforms and SB 830 charted a new course – one that recognizes the importance of selective fisheries and the enormous economic value of these fisheries to Oregon. Three years into the “transition period” of the reforms, the benefits of the plan are clearly evident.

The commercial fishery has benefited from the increased hatchery production in the off-channel areas that was promised. We also understand that ODFW and WDFW are making progress to evaluate and develop new off-channel areas. Revenue from the \$9.75 Columbia Basin endorsement fee – which was established by SB 830 and is paid by recreational anglers-- is helping to fund many of the activities benefiting commercial fishers.

SB 830 also established a Columbia River Fisheries Transition Fund and appropriated General Fund dollars to provide financial assistance to commercial fishers negatively affected by the plan. Fortunately, commercial fisheries have exceeded expectations during the transition period and no lower river counties have applied these funds. This means that about \$1 million remains available to help offset potential future economic impacts to the commercial sector as the plan is implemented.

The increased priority for mainstem recreational fisheries has provided a significant boost to our economy and ODFW’s budget. In 2014 and 2015, there were approximately 450,000 Columbia River recreational salmon angler trips below Bonneville Dam -- a significant increase. This represents about \$30 million in annual economic activity and doesn’t include the value of tributary fisheries, including the Willamette.

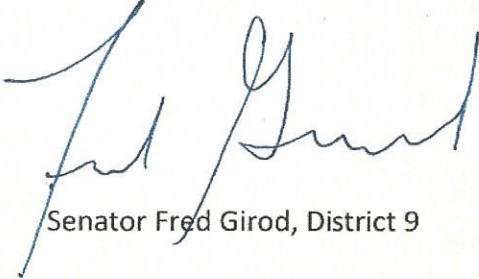
Meanwhile, the 165,000 recreational anglers who purchase the Columbia Basin endorsement annually generate over \$1 million in endorsement fee revenue and millions more in license fee revenue for ODFW – a figure that doesn't include millions in sportfishing excise tax revenue generated by these fisheries. This compares to about \$250,000 in annual license fee and ad velorem tax revenue received from the commercial gillnet fishery, which is less than ODFW spends administering these fisheries.

As you know, ODFW recently received a large sportfishing license fee increase from the legislature and it continues to grapple with its future revenue sources. The agency simply can't afford to risk the loss of the Columbia River endorsement and angler acceptance of the recent license fee increase by failing to implement these reforms.


Last but certainly not least, we support the move away from non-selective gillnets for mainstem, mixed-stock fisheries. Beyond the continued concerns about bycatch, we also know that selective fisheries are critical to conserving wild salmon populations and meeting maintaining hatchery producton.

As supporters of SB 830, we urge you to carry through with the policy objectives that fully implement the intent of the reforms, which will benefit our fish, our economy and ODFW's fiscal viability. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Senator Fred Girod, District 9



Senator Rod Monroe, District 24

Cc: Curt Melcher, Director of ODFW