

Exhibit (C)

**Coquille Conservation
Hatchery**

**Supplemental #2
Public Correspondence received
as of August 4, 2022**

August 3, 2022

Dear Fish and Wildlife Commission Members;

The Coquille River Chinook salmon has long been known as one of Oregon's treasured resources. These magnificent fish have generated a great deal of inspiration and passion for generations. The fishery that these fish created in the fall of the year was astounding. Anglers from all over the United States traveled to our river to partake in this amazing fishery. While the fishery generated millions of dollars' worth of economic impact the fish themselves created almost a mystical following. Thousands of students annually would participate in the proliferation of this unique creature. Between the economic impact and the educational opportunities that the Coquille Chinook produced - our community was deeply interwoven with this population.

Today nearly all of the community benefits that the Coquille Chinook created have been lost. Between 2005 and 2015, the population of Chinook in the Coquille averaged over 13,000 fish. Recent poor ocean conditions combined with two non-native predatory fish in the watershed have pushed the Coquille Chinook population to the brink of extinction. Last year an estimated 344 Chinook spawned in the Coquille watershed.

Coquille River Chinook have been a part of the Coquille River ecosystem and our community since time immemorial. Our community is reeling from the loss of these fish as well as the entire watershed. Salmon as you know are an integral part of a healthy watershed. Hundreds of species of animals are dependent on the nutrients that the salmon bring from the ocean.

The invaluable genetic resources that are the Coquille Chinook will soon be lost forever if we do not intervene. Humans brought the striped bass and the smallmouth bass to the west coast. We humans must be a major component of the restoration of the Coquille Chinook.

The Coquille Chinook Conservation Proposal is critical to the salvation of this population. We must use every available tool to restore this population before it is too late. On average, 95 percent of the Chinook eggs that are deposited in the gravel in the Coquille River watershed will not survive to produce emergent fry. At this low population level this mortality is unacceptable. The proposal to take a minimal number of naturally produced broodstock and expand their reproductive potential is imperative to the success of rebuilding this population. The time to aggressively intervene is now.

We emphatically encourage you to approve the Coquille Chinook Conservation Proposal. Without taking the steps outlined in the Conservation Proposal the Coquille Chinook will become nothing more than a memory. Please support the proposal and make this recovery effort your legacy as well as ours.

Sincerely

Josh Bettsworth
Oregon Anglers Alliance