



MEMORANDUM

Department of Fish and Wildlife

Intra Departmental

Date: April 17, 2018

To: Commissioner (Chair) Michael Finley
Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission

From: Cameron Smith, Deputy Director

Subject: **Budget Town Hall Summary**

Chair Finley and Commissioners,

The Director's Office and Region staff just completed two weeks of Budget Town Hall Meetings in 8 different locations throughout the State. Meetings were held in La Grande, Bend, Klamath Falls, Medford, North Bend, Newport, Tillamook, and Portland. Public participation at these meetings averaged 12-13 attendees per meeting, with a range from 7 (Medford) to 20 (North Bend). The Department received valuable feedback at these meetings, which will be used to inform decision making as we develop the 19-21 biennium budget. In general, feedback provided to the Department at these meetings can be summarized as follows:

1. **Fees:** Overwhelmingly participants commented in favor of continuing with the legislatively adopted fee schedule, which includes a fee increase in 2020. We presented information about our current budget, displayed future budget projections, and discussed the potential of withholding or delaying the scheduled fee increase. Participants largely urged the Department to stay the course and not withhold the fee increase scheduled for 2020.

We did receive specific comments regarding the cost of the daily angling license (\$20) and shellfish license (\$10) being prohibitive to customers looking to go fishing and crabbing on charter boats. We will be evaluating these license types in the coming weeks to see if and what our options are for reducing fees and reducing barriers to participation.

2. **Program Cuts/Concerns:** Attendees across the state have concerns about program cuts that could potentially be implemented and cuts to programs that were established in previous biennia. Specifically, multiple comments were received in support of the Western Oregon Stream Restoration Project (WOSRP) Biologists, and the Water Quality and Quantity Program. Attendees were reminded that at this time ODFW is not proposing any cuts to existing staff or programs, but that we are legislatively mandated to provide a 10% cut list for all fund types. Due to public comments, the Department will create a General Fund (GF) Policy Option Package (POP) that would restore WOSRP Biologist positions that were cut during the last biennium. It was also pointed out to attendees that

the federal Recovering America's Wildlife Act, if passed, would provide substantial funding that could be used to fund these types of programs.

3. **Legislative Concepts:** Most commenters are in favor of our proposed legislative concepts for 2019. Participants were most interested in the legislative concept regarding wildlife mandatory check stations. We fielded several questions/comments regarding poaching concerns, support for Oregon State Police, and on how wildlife mandatory check stations (if passed by the legislature) would be implemented. Commenters were also interested in the concepts for removing big horn sheep ewe hunts from the "once in a lifetime" category, the non-resident hunter cap adjustment, and sunset date removal for A&H, R&E, and CBE fees/programs.
4. **Policy Option Packages and Program Analyses:** Generally attendees spoke largely in favor of expanding Department programming and were in favor of the proposed POPs. Specific comments were provided in favor of Leaburg Hatchery, Klamath Anadromous Fish Reintroduction, Nearshore Monitoring, Wolf Plan Implementation, and Oregon Conservation Strategy Implementation. The Conservation Angler (CA) provided comment in opposition of the Leaburg Hatchery POP, Klamath Anadromous Fish Reintroduction Hatchery Capital Construction, and provided concerns on several other GF POPs. CA also provided comments on providing extra scrutiny on GF POPs and existing GF programming to ensure they are providing broad public benefit, and on the need to evaluate existing programming to determine successes or failures prior to pursuing new funding.

Overall the Town Hall meetings went well and we look forward to continued discussions at our next EBAC meeting, May 3rd. If you have any questions regarding Budget Town Halls, 19-21 budget development, or this memo, please let me know.