



Feb. 13,2017

Trout Unlimited testimony in opposition to HB 2365

Chair Clem and Committee members-

My named is Tom Wolf, here representing Trout Unlimited, the nation's largest cold water conservation group, with 3200 members in Oregon and 155,000 across the nation. Trout Unlimited's membership, besides being ardent conservationists, are also anglers and hunters who love to spend their free time fishing and hunting in the abundant public lands owned by federal government, here in the United States. The vast amount of public lands, owned by all Americans, is a great benefit that gives us unique opportunities in this country. That is why Trout Unlimited vehemently opposes HB 2365 which not only an unnecessary bill but one which could lead to economic hardship for Oregon.

HB 2365 would set up a Task Force of legislators which would look at what needs to be done to transfer federal land in Oregon to private or state ownership, engaging agencies, staff time and numerous meetings with the possibility of passing legislation which would facilitate transfer of federal land to state and possibly private ownership. Trout Unlimited has several concerns about this both economic and the potential for sportspeople to lose access to currently available public lands.

Our first concern is why have this proposed Task Force in the first place -and what about the cost of this Task Force? Task Forces, as created by legislation, typically cost anywhere from \$50,000- \$500,000 depending how expensive is staffing, if a professional facilitator is hired, number of meetings, what can of studies and data is required and where meetings are held. So, it seems irresponsible in a climate when the state of Oregon is facing economic woes to run a Task Force that is both unnecessary and probably unable to accomplish its goals.

Second, let's just look at the cost of Oregon state Natural Resources agencies taking over responsibility of running federal lands. Currently the Oregon Department of Forestry state forest program has a staff of 220 people with a budget of \$96,311,522 to manage a little over 800,000 acres of state forest in Oregon. So if you look at ODF taking over management of 15.7 million acres of US Forest Service, recognizing this is 20 times more land to manage. So just with data available, it would mean having a staff of over 4000 that has a budget of almost 2 billion dollars. Even if we were to cut this budget "down" to \$1 billion, that is a tremendous increase in ODF budget at a time when the money for state Natural resource agencies and all state programs are facing tremendous financial difficulty. And my suggested figures don't include the 15.73 million acres of Bureau of Land Management land in

Oregon, some of which is forested and some which is grasslands. Who will management that and if costs are similar, this means another large staff and about \$1 billion in agenda budgeting. Oregon state government does not have that sort of money.

And as far as economics goes, let's look at the money put into local, state and national economies by recreationists on federal public lands. In the United States, outdoor recreation contributes almost \$ 650 billion to the economy every year across the nation. And employs \$6.1 million people directly. Sportsfishing in the United States contributes \$114 billion a year to our nation's economy, including \$15 million in federal, state and local taxes, much of which ends in budgets of state fish and wildlife agencies (American Sportsfishing Association). Hunting brings in \$38 billion to communities. In Oregon, over \$3 billion dollars (Dean Runyan ODFW study) for fishing, hunting and wildlife viewing ended up in local rural areas as people pursuing these sports spent money on lodging, food, restaurants, equipment and other supplies in small Oregon towns. The hikers, backpackers, rafters, campers and other outdoor enthusiasts contribute 9.8 \$ billion every year to Oregon's economy. So, outdoor recreation is a big part of Oregon's economy, contributing \$ 12.8 billion (Outdoor Industry Association) every year-much of it is isolated rural communities.

So finally, Trout unlimited members and many others, Republicans and Democrats, consider federal public land ours to use and greatly value it. Several years ago, while I was at a National TU meeting to accept an award, I met one of TU Board Trustees, at the time, Ted Roosevelt IV. Here he was, the grandson of a World War II Congressional Medal of Honor winner and the great grandson of the greatest environmental president we ever had. While my grandfather was an undereducated logger (3rd grade) and my great grandfather was a German sailor who jumped ship in Portland so he wouldn't have to go back and serve in Kaiser Wilhelm's army. So, our backgrounds were quite different but we hit it off during dinner and had a very nice discussion-especially about the importance of protecting public land. Ted told me as I was leaving that, something he regards as a legacy of his family is to protect our public lands for all Americans, now and in the future. This is something I think about all the time and part of the reason I am here, representing TU members, opposing HB 2365.

And I will end with a Quote from the first Ted Roosevelt, 26th president of the United States.

"The nation behaves well it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over the next generation increased, and not impaired, in value."

Trout Unlimited members, Republicans and Democrats, hunters and anglers, men and women, ask you to please not pass on HB 2365 which will impair the value of our public lands.