

Duncan Law, Professor Emeritus

Founder, Oregon State University Seafood & Education Research Center, Astoria

September 20, 2012

John Bogdanski

Dear John,

Much of my scientific and research career has been devoted to improving Oregon's salmon runs. But you don't have to be a scientist to know that making fishery policy by ballot measure is a bad idea – especially in the Columbia River.

Fisheries management should remain in the hands of the Oregon and Washington state regulators, tribal governments and federal agencies. They have the expertise to understand the science and can balance competing sport, commercial and tribal fisheries to ensure safe passage of endangered salmon. Thanks to their collaborative management, the National Marine Fisheries Service lists no Columbia River salmon stocks as being overfished or even close to overfished.

Measure 81 does nothing to save endangered fish. It simply reallocates the share of fish that commercial fishermen now catch to sport-fishermen. The fact is that sport-fishermen have caught 80% of Columbia River Spring Chinook Salmon while commercial fishermen have caught only 20% of the fish over the last ten years. This is an effort led by the sports-fishing industry to eliminate its competition and change the decades-old, balanced fisheries management structure on the Columbia.

What's wrong with that? Three things:

First, it's just not fair. While gillnets would be banned for Oregon commercial fishers, Washington commercial fishers would continue to use gillnets legally.

Second, Measure 81's ban on commercial gillnet fishing in Oregon threatens the livelihoods of our local commercial fishing families and drastically cuts their income. I grew up in Astoria and put myself through Oregon State working in canneries. I spent 40 years in Oregon State University's seafood lab focused on improving Oregon's sustainable salmon runs. Now is not the time to harm another vital Oregon industry and cut Oregon jobs.

Third, Measure 81 would hurt Oregon's seafood wholesalers, restaurants, local fish markets and consumers who would no longer be able to buy fresh-caught Columbia River salmon and sturgeon anywhere in Oregon. The measure specifically bans such purchases by Oregonians.

The Native Fish Society, which advocates for recovery of sustainable native fish, stated in opposing Measure 81: "This initiative is being characterized by the proponents as a way to save wild salmon and steelhead when in reality it's just another attempt to get more fish for the recreational fishing industry."

I agree. Please join me in voting NO on Measure 81.

Sincerely,



Duncan Law
Professor Emeritus