

Speaker Dave Hunt on Sea Lion predation in the Willamette River

Monday night, **Speaker of the House Dave Hunt** hosted a community forum/discussion on sea lion predation and management on the Willamette River. Hunt, the state representative from District 40 which includes Willamette Falls, said that it's clear there are more animals eating more fish at a cost to the Sportfishing Industry and sports anglers. Along with being committed to helping our industry, Speaker Hunt is vitally concerned about the health of native salmon runs in the face of this sea lion onslaught. He's committed to exploring solutions and believes lethal removal is the direction we should be headed. The meeting was scheduled to be an hour and a half and ran nearly 2 ½ hours.

Thanks to the efforts of NSIA members there's a refreshing sensitivity to the Sportfishing industry. Dan Grogan, along with other businesses in the district has invested themselves and their companies in getting to know Speaker Dave Hunt. This relationship is paying off with deeper understanding of our industry, as Rep. Hunt several times through the evening mentioned the value, importance and significance of "Sportfishing Industry" interests. This is a new and important development. It's great to have a state legislative leader who understands the importance of sports fishing to our economy.

The Sportfishing community was well-represented. My best guess would place the audience around 100 people...maybe more. Steelheaders and CCA members showed in force as did non-affiliated sports anglers from around the area. We were courteous, respectful and clear in our views --- it was gratifying to see how well we presented ourselves. The tribes spoke and shared our perspective that lethal removal is the best tool we have available in curbing the appetites and predation of salmon in the Willamette and Columbia.

An extreme animal rights group showed up, were disruptive and disrespectful. Still, our people held their tongues which was a clear benefit to our position.

Thankfully for sport fishing interests and for the protection of Willamette River fishery resources, Speaker Hunt was looking for solutions. Several were advanced, but the overwhelming consensus pushed for lethal removal. The Speaker indicated that in his discussions and analysis of the issue that the public strongly supports lethal removal.

Rep. Bill Kennemer was also in attendance. Both the Speaker and Rep. Kennemer made a point of connecting with Liz and I. It was a good night for our interests.

Again, thank you to the NSIA members that continue to connect with their electeds. Your contact and efforts are opening doors and paving the way for us to gain much-needed access and discussion on the issues of importance to NSIA businesses. We are fortunate to have friends of sport fishing on both sides of the aisle who understand the economic, cultural and environmental values our sport fishing heritage affords the citizens of this region.

Please take a moment and send a note of thanks to Speaker Hunt. Let him know the sport fishing community appreciates his support. Rep.DaveHunt@state.or.us

Trey Carskadon
Vice President
BDC Advertising, Inc.
503-723-5723 Ext. 102