



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

**Department of Fish and Wildlife**  
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February 8, 2018

Low Impact Hydropower Institute  
329 Massachusetts Avenue, Suite 2  
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**Via Electronic Mail**



**Subject: Comments for Low Impact Hydropower Institute (LIHI) Recertification of Falls Creek Hydroelectric Project**

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) is writing to express our support for recertification of the Falls Creek Hydroelectric Project operation by the LIHI. This letter responds to the following LIHI criteria: stream flow, upstream and downstream fish passage, and T&E species.

The Falls Creek Hydroelectric Project (Project) is required to bypass a minimum flow of 1 cfs. A self-regulating orifice incorporated into the weir continues to provide that flow and has been functional since the initial startup of the Project. In the wet/high flow time of the year water in excess of Project capacity continues to flow down Falls Creek. Natural flow typically falls below 1 cfs in the summer, at which time the Project shuts down until higher flows return once again in early fall. ODFW is satisfied that stream flows below the Project maintain habitat for fish and wildlife.

Native migratory fish are not present nor were historically present at or upstream from the diversion weir. Upstream fish passage therefore is not required for the Project. For downstream fish passage the Project continues to maintain a fish screen over the diversion to prevent fish migration downstream through the Project diversion.

Within the vicinity of the Project both Upper Willamette Winter Steelhead and Spring Chinook Salmon are listed as "Threatened" under the Federal Endangered Species Act and are present in the South Santiam River. The lower 0.1 miles of Falls Creek provides Winter Steelhead juvenile rearing habitat and that habitat is maintained by required flows. The Project is not thought to impact either species. The federally listed Northern Spotted Owl is also present in the Project area, but is unaffected by Project operations.

In closing, ODFW appreciates the opportunity to provide input that supports the recertification for the Falls Creek Hydroelectric Project by LIHI. Should you have any questions to these comments please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

John Zauner  
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Cc (via electronic mail):  
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