

March 16, 2021

House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Testimony: HB 2600 and HB 2913

Chair Witt, Vice Chairs Breese-Iverson and Hudson, and members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of HB 2600 and HB 2913 in my role as Facilitator for the Joint Legislative Task Force on Alternative Funding for Fish, Wildlife, and Related Outdoor Recreation and Education, established by the Legislature in 2015. Since completion of the Task Force's work, I have been volunteering as a private citizen to help ensure the implementation of the recommendations of the Task Force and its successful collaborative process.

Few believed that the disparate group of conservationists, hunters, fisher people, government officials, and private recreation interests who comprised the Alternative Funding Task Force could ever agree on strategies for addressing ODFW's short and long-term funding challenges. But we achieved unanimous agreement, with the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund (OCRF) as a center piece of those recommendations. You, the Legislature, agreed with the need for such a Fund and subsequently passed HB 2829 in 2019, providing a \$1 million challenge match from the General Fund and requiring the establish of an advisory committee to guide the use of those funds.

OCRF's advocates and supporters continue to meet the challenges set by the Legislature:

?The OCRF Advisory Committee has been meeting for a year and, with its guidance, a variety of beneficial conservation projects have been approved for funding by ODFW.

?Almost \$400,000 has been raised to date, primarily from small donors.

?With support lined up from major recreation corporations, we are well on our way to more than meeting the \$1 million challenge.

Now we need the Legislature to give us the opportunity to complete the charge you gave us. We need you to pass HB 2313 to continue the Fund and the work of its Advisory Committee. We also need you to pass HB 2600 to ensure continuous, stable funding for the OCRF.

Thank you to the committee for your consideration of these important bills.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Owens
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cc: Representatives Helm, Lively, Neron, Power, and Wilde, and Senators Dembrow, Frederick, and Prozanski