OREGON CHAPTER OF
THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY
PO Box 2378
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FROM: The Oregon Chapter of The Wildlife Society

TO: House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources

SUBJECT: Support for HB2691

Chair Witt and committee members,

The Oregon Chapter of the Wildlife Society is writing to express our strong support for HB2691. Avian mortality from wind turbines is a concern for multiple species and recent evidence indicates that relatively simple changes can have large effects on reducing impacts. Alternative energy is important for addressing climate change and associated impacts on the environment. However, efforts must be made to reduce unintended consequences of new technologies to ensure sustainability and public support.

The Wildlife Society is an international organization founded in 1937, representing nearly 10,000 professionals, including scientists, managers, educators, technicians, planners, consultants, conservation officers, students and others who manage, conserve, and study wildlife populations and habitat. The Oregon Chapter of The Wildlife Society (ORTWS) represents nearly 500 such professionals from many areas of public and private enterprise in Oregon. Our mission is to promote wise conservation and management of wildlife resources in Oregon by serving and representing natural resource professionals. A central purpose of ORTWS is to support scientifically sound management policies.

Impact mortality associated with wind energy has both conservation and public acceptance concerns for adoption of sustainable energy sources. Multiple mitigation strategies have been proposed to address unintended consequences of wind turbines, including but not limited to, avoidance, minimization, and compensatory mitigation (Arnett & May 2016). Having baseline data on species distribution and movement, as proposed by the Oregon Conservation Strategy, would assist in addressing planning to avoid sites with high probability of adverse impacts. Addressing minimization requires investigation of technological inputs to identify techniques that may effectively allow wildlife species to recognize hazards of wind energy sites.

Recent research identified that changes in visibility of wind turbine blades could have significant reduction in avian mortality from wind turbines. Specifically, painting a single turbine blade black reduced avian mortality rates by 70% (May et al. 2020). Application of these research results must be investigated to identify if reduction in mortality occurs *in situ*. If shown effective, and applied to construction at new wind energy sites along with appropriate site planning, these techniques could improve the sustainability of wind turbines as an alternative energy, while reducing cost to industry for alternative mitigation efforts.

On behalf of ORTWS Members and Board, thank you for your time and consideration in this matter and please do not hesitate to contact us with questions or to engage further discussion.

Respectfully,

ORTWS Board of Directors

ORTWS Contacts for HB2691:
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References:

Arnett, E.B., May, R. (2016). Mitigating wind energy impacts on wildlife: approaches for multiple taxaHuman–Wildlife Interactions 10(1): 28–41

May, R., Nygard, T., Falkdalen, U., Astrom, J., Hamre, O., Stokke, B.G. (2020). Paint it black: Efficacy of increased wind turbine rotor blade visibility to reduce avian fatalities. Ecology and Evolution 10(16): 8927-8935