



Oregon

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**To: The Honorable Nancy Nathanson, Chair
House Committee on Revenue**



House Bill 3328

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The department appreciates the opportunity to discuss House Bill 3328 with you today. House Bill 3328 imposes additional personal income tax, and adjusts rate of tax annually for inflation in order to fund the conservation of Oregon's wildlife (as defined in ORS 496.004(19)). Additionally, HB 3328 creates a credit against personal income taxes for tax payers that purchased a hunting, angling, or shellfish license, tag or permit in that tax year.

The development of HB 3328 was based on a recommendation made by the [Task Force on Funding for Fish, Wildlife and Related Outdoor Recreation and Education](#) that was created by the legislature and appointed by Governor Kate Brown in 2015 (HB 2402, 2015). This Task Force explored sources of funding for connecting Oregonians with the outdoors and conserving Oregon's wildlife. Currently, funding for wildlife conservation is derived from the sale of licenses, tags and permits to harvest wildlife, federal excise taxes on angling and hunting equipment (including all gun sales), and dedicated, limited federal funding for species recovery or enhancements (ex. Mitchell Act for fish restoration through hatchery production and fish disease evaluation). These funding sources support the [North American Model of Conservation](#). This model has been successful in supporting the management and recovery of many game species, but it is not sufficient to cover the research and inventory of all 850+ wildlife species in Oregon, most of which are not harvested by nontribal individuals. The [key conservation issues](#) for many of these species are driven by the activities of all Oregonians.

HB 3328 would potentially generate close to \$160,000,000 in biennial funding to implement the Task Force recommendations. For perspective, the agency's 2019-21 budget is \$390,182,502 in total funds. This would add substantially to the funding available to the department.

The funds generated by HB 3328 are intended to replace \$35,094,508 in General Fund currently provided to ODFW, and replace both the General Fund and Other Funds paid to Oregon State Police for enforcement of wildlife laws. HB 3328 additionally contributes \$500,000 (annually) from this new fund source to the [Office of Outdoor Recreation](#). The remaining funding (approximately \$100,000,000 per biennium) would be used to implement the state's species actions plans, the proactive, voluntary conservation approaches in the [Oregon Conservation Strategy](#) and [Nearshore Strategy](#), increase funding for science, research and monitoring, result in increased data management and analysis capabilities, and provide a grant source for partnership-based conservation and recreation enhancements. This grant source would continue to be provided through the [Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund](#), and overseen by the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Advisory Committee.

Further enhancement of existing programs can benefit all Oregonians, for example investing in the [Salmon Trout Enhancement Program](#) would support thousands of hours of volunteerism and classroom education on the salmon lifecycle in schools around the state. Increased investment in research and monitoring through the existing fish research group ([REDD](#)) for nongame fish species would also improve information on water quality for all Oregonians. Advancing community science initiatives for small mammal and avian inventories would engage more people in understanding our state's wildlife. Funding generated by HB 3328 can also be used to expand the agency's focus on protecting and enhancing fish and wildlife habitat, for example development of a Habitat Division and investment in conducting extensive mapping of species habitat and movement ([COMPASS](#)) to better inform all Oregonians.

In Oregon, there has been broad support to find alternative funding sources for conservation of all wildlife, to enhance equitable access and experiences in Oregon's outdoors, and to ensure Oregon is investing in ecosystem-level resiliency to address climate change and other large-scale impacts to habitat. Over 70 partner organizations and thousands of individual contributions have supported the private fundraising campaign for the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund.

Lastly, Congress has introduced the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) in the last three sessions. This Act recognizes the need for the nation to replicate the success of the North American Model of Conservation by expanding it to proactively invest in addressing the needs of all wildlife and to prevent at-risk species from becoming threatened or endangered. RAWA would provide dedicated federal funding to implement the Oregon Conservation Strategy and Oregon Nearshore Strategy. This potential new federal fund source will require a non-federal match. If passed, HB 3328 could provide a way to ensure that Oregon receives the full allocation of RAWA funds.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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