



**OREGON CHAPTER OF
THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY**

PO Box 2378
Corvallis, OR 97339

FROM: The Oregon Chapter of The Wildlife Society

TO: House Committee on Revenue

SUBJECT: Support for HB3328

Chair Nathanson and committee members,

The Oregon Chapter of the Wildlife Society is writing to express our strong support for HB3328. The need for diversified funding for wildlife and habitat conservation is well known in Oregon and across the nation. HB3328 creates an avenue for all Oregon citizens to invest in the natural resources that make Oregon such an amazing place, with the diversity in ecological areas, wildlife, and recreation opportunities. The funding of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, through broad based, sustainable revenue, will allow for the implementation of recommendations from the Task Force on Funding for Fish, Wildlife and Related Outdoor Recreation and Education (HB2402).

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.

The need for additional funding for wildlife conservation is a well known, chronic concern for natural resource conservation. In 2015, the [Joint Interim Task Force on Funding for Fish, Wildlife and Related Outdoor Recreation and Education](#) (HB2402) was created to address this issue and develop funding proposals to produce a sustainable, broad-based revenue source to meet Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife's (ODFW) current and future conservation challenges. Recognizing the long term, and increasing challenges of wildlife conservation in Oregon the Task Force said:

“Today’s challenges facing fish, wildlife and habitat are not being met by the current funding model. The ever increasing complexity and cost of conservation and management must be shared by all Oregonians.”

The Task Force reported recommendations for the legislature to develop sustainable, dedicated funding sources providing, at a minimum, \$86.9 million per biennium new funds to fulfill the obligations of wildlife management and conservation by ODFW. The expected, dedicated funds from HB3328 are estimated to fully replace general fund allocations for ODFW, OSP Fish & Wildlife Division, as well as providing the recommended funding increases necessary for ODFW

to implement the [Oregon Conservation Strategy](#) and the other Task Force recommendations.

The Oregon Conservation Strategy is Oregon's [State Wildlife Action Plan](#). These plans serve as the blueprint for conserving our nation's fish and wildlife and preventing species from becoming endangered. Oregon's Strategy was developed by a partnership of numerous agencies, conservation groups, and industry stakeholders and represents a collaborative and proactive strategy for maintaining and restoring Oregon's fish and wildlife and their habitats. Core targets of the Oregon Conservation Strategy include, but are not limited to:

- Monitor and proactively conserve at-risk species
- Maintain and restore critical habitats and the wildlife they support
- Assess and manage the impacts of climate change and wildfire risks
- Assess and manage the impacts of population growth and development pressures on Oregon's wildlife and habitats
- Expand recreational resources, outreach, and other programs, to a broader spectrum of Oregon citizens
- Continue to build and strengthen hunting and fishing opportunities and programs

The implementation of the Oregon Conservation Strategy benefits all citizens and industry across Oregon. Increased information on population trends, improved efficiency of conservation efforts, and proactive prevention of population declines to endangered species status creates certainty for industry ranging from agriculture, green energy, timber harvest, outdoor recreation, and development. Understanding habitat and species requirements means that conservation projects can more effectively apply funding for the greatest return on investment. Additional funding would also create jobs, and natural resource investment has been shown to have highly positive impacts on local economies. Those come in part from innovative projects that address the conservation need and balance the impacts of a growing population, and improve access to the benefits of the great outdoors for Oregon residents and visitors.

Sustainable and diversified funding for ODFW and OSP Fish & Wildlife Division would also allow for stability in planning and program development. The recommendations for increased funding include eliminating planned license fee schedule increases, reducing pressure on those purchasing hunting and fishing licenses, and implementing education and outreach programs to engage more Oregon residents in conservation and recreation activities. Additionally, the funding would more accurately reflect Oregon residents' beliefs on how to properly fund ODFW's wildlife management and conservation efforts.

In order to adequately fund and implement the Oregon Conservation Strategy, ODFW requires new, diversified, and sustainable sources of revenue to supplement existing funding. It is important to recognize the continued efforts to establish more diversified wildlife management funding at the federal level, following the [The Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish & Wildlife Resources](#). Federal legislative efforts continue to pursue broad conservation funding, including the Recovering America's Wildlife Act, which would provide \$1.3 billion in dedicated funding annually for the implementation of state fish and wildlife agencies' wildlife action plans.

Funds from federal legislation would be distributed to the state fish and wildlife agencies and Oregon would be able to access approximately \$52 million per biennium for implementation of the Oregon Conservation Strategy. A fully funded ODFW would play an important role in providing the required matching funds to access funding provided through Recovering America's Wildlife Act or any additional federal funding sources.

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 HB3328:

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