



March 31, 2021

Rep. Nancy Nathanson, Chair  
House Committee on Revenue  
Oregon State Legislature  
Salem, OR 97301

RE: House Bill 3328

Dear Chair Nathanson and Members of the Committee,

Oregon is a wildlife wonderland. The misty spout of a gray whale, a summer evening flutter of bats and the squeak of a pika in the Gorge are hard to put a price on. Many of us can't imagine this state without them, but these are all animals that need our help.

This is why we are writing to express our strong support for providing a permanent source of funding for wildlife conservation in Oregon.

This is an urgent need for our state, where 88% of species lack a dedicated stream of conservation funding. Conservation organizations like the Oregon Zoo help make up for the lack of state resources. For more than 20 years we have worked to protect species such as western pond turtles, butterflies and birds of prey through recovery programs and grant funding. Just this month, the Oregon Zoo Foundation awarded \$25,000 to the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund in support of projects that help implement the Oregon Conservation Strategy.

Our zoo has also been a champion for federal efforts to support underfunded state conservation programs, such as the bipartisan Recovering America's Wildlife Act. By securing permanent funding within the state, ODFW will be able to provide the required matching funds for these federal sources.

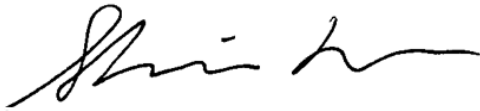
All Oregonians are affected by this lack of funding. Many once common species — including pollinators and amphibians — are in decline. Proactive conservation benefits taxpayers and businesses as well. Often, no conservation action is taken until a species is listed under the Endangered Species Act, by which point recovery becomes more challenging and costly, with more severe human impacts.

While private and philanthropic efforts can help, they alone cannot meet the need. As noted by the [Joint Interim Task Force on Funding for Fish, Wildlife and Related Outdoor Recreation and Education](#) which was created by the 2015 Legislature to address this issue: "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."

House Bill 3328 would establish new, ongoing funding to support Oregon's conservation and recreation programs. While the Zoo does not presently take a position on the particular mechanism under consideration, we strongly urge you to identify permanent funding to address this critical need.

We appreciate this committee's work in preserving healthy wildlife and outdoor recreation for all Oregonians. We ask that you now work to secure a permanent source of conservation funding in support of Oregon's people and wildlife.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shervin Hess". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Shervin Hess  
Wildlife Advocacy Program Manager, Oregon Zoo