



To: House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

From: Julia DeGraw, Oregon Conservation Network, and Oregon League of Conservation Voters

Date: 3/2/2023

RE: SUPPORT of HB 3159, Recovering Oregon's Wildlife Fund

Dear Chair Marsh, Vice Chairs Levy and Levy, and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on HB 3159. On behalf of our thousands of members and supporters in Oregon, we would like to register the Oregon League of Conservation Voters, and the Oregon Conservation Network's strong support to pass HB 3159, Recovering Oregon's Wildlife Fund. HB 3159 is a bill of support in the OCN Hotlist of Bills for the 2023 Legislative Session.

The Oregon Conservation Network (OCN) is coordinated through the Oregon League of Conservation Voters (OLCV). OCN is a coalition of 42 not-for-profit organizations throughout the state, united to advocate for pro-conservation legislation and to fight policies that threaten our state's natural legacy. OCN is powered by tens of thousands of Oregonians who belong to their membership organizations. We work to promote policies that will ensure a better Oregon for our children – and to fight policies that do not.

Oregon is fortunate to be home to a diverse array of fish and wildlife species and the habitats they rely upon. However, growing threats from climate change, invasive species, habitat loss and fragmentation and other human-made and natural-caused impacts are taking a toll on native wildlife's ability to thrive. In Oregon, there are nearly 300 species that are considered 'species of greatest conservation need', meaning they face elevated risks of extinction. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) has a blueprint for conserving these species and habitats, known as the Oregon Conservation Strategy and Nearshore Strategy (Conservation Strategy). The goals of the Conservation Strategy are to maintain healthy fish and wildlife populations by maintaining and restoring functioning habitats, preventing declines of at-risk species, and reversing declines in these resources where possible.

However, due to inconsistent and insufficient funding for these conservation programs, ODFW does not have resources to implement many of the necessary actions recommended in the Conservation Strategy. The combination of mounting threats to our fish and wildlife with a lack of dedicated funding to address those issues underscores the urgency of passing HB 3159 - Recovering Oregon's Wildlife Fund. Further delay puts these species' future in jeopardy.

To pay for these critical conservation programs, HB 3159 would utilize a 1.5% increase in the state transient lodging tax to generate approximately \$30 million a year for proactive, collaborative wildlife and habitat conservation. This is a bold, yet cost-effective solution that would provide a steady, sustainable source of funds to ODFW's Conservation Strategy to help offset the increasing impacts of tourism and other natural and human-caused impacts on Oregon's most at-risk fish, wildlife, and habitats.



Oregonians have a strong interest in healthy populations of native flora and fauna and the habitats that sustain them.

Please vote YES on HB 3159 - Recovering Oregon's Wildlife Fund.

Thank you for taking our comments into consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julia B. DeGraw".

Julia B. DeGraw

Coalition Director

Oregon Conservation Network, and Oregon League of Conservation Voters

Testimony Submitted On behalf of all the OCN Member Organizations:

1000 Friends of Oregon, Association of Oregon Recyclers, Audubon Society of Portland, Beyond Toxics, Cascadia Wildlands, Center for Biological Diversity, Center for Food Safety, Central Oregon LandWatch, Climate Solutions, Defenders of Wildlife, Deschutes River Alliance, Engineers for a Sustainable Future, The Environmental Center, Environment Oregon, Food & Water Watch, Friends of Mount Hood, Friends of the Columbia Gorge, Friends of Family Farmers, Greater Hells Canyon Council, League of Women Voters of Oregon, Native Fish Society, Neighbors for Clean Air, Oceana, Oregon Coast Alliance, Oregon Environmental Council, Oregon Land and Water Alliance, Oregon League of Conservation Voters, Oregon Natural Desert Association, Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility, Oregon Shores Conservation Coalition, Oregon Wild, Pew Charitable Trusts, Renewable Northwest, Rogue Riverkeeper, Sierra Club Oregon Chapter, The Street Trust, Surfrider Foundation, Trout Unlimited, Tualatin Riverkeepers, WaterWatch of Oregon, The Wetlands Conservancy, Wild Salmon Center, Zero Coalition