

Submitter: Jennifer Hauge

On Behalf  
Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and  
Water

Measure: HB4148

The Animal Legal Defense Fund writes in support of HB 4148, an important wildlife omnibus package that includes a meaningful investment, which will give a new dimension to the way the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) approaches wildlife management, responds to human-wildlife conflict, and prioritizes wildlife rehabilitation across the state.

Thank you to Representative Ken Helm for introducing this innovative legislation. We and our supporters in Oregon care deeply about the state's wildlife and support advancing strong programs that ensure wildlife is protected.

Particularly, investing in a wildlife coexistence program with dedicated conservation biologists and staff members at ODFW will enable the agency to address prevention of human-wildlife conflicts with innovative non-lethal strategies, promote wildlife stewardship, and support invaluable wildlife rehabilitation centers across the state with much needed grants to amplify their efforts in caring for injured, sick, and orphaned wildlife.

The education and outreach portion of the program would be positive positioning for the agency, especially with Oregonians who may never have had reason to interact previously. And, should they need assistance with a wildlife issue, it would allow the community to feel supported by their wildlife agency and the opportunity for nonlethal strategies to be implemented, thereby saving the lives of wild animals and earning more of the public trust.

Additionally, continuing to support wildlife crossings will not only protect wildlife but will also improve public safety and save costs for the state and drivers. In addition to the animal suffering that can result from wildlife-vehicle collisions, the animal's death can represent a cost to the state in the form of lost potential earnings of the impacted driver and passenger(s) and often either carcass removal and disposal or wildlife rehabilitation in addition to the involvement of first responders (e.g. law enforcement officers, paramedics, emergency medical technicians, and firefighters) as well as transportation authorities.

This bill is an important opportunity to reflect the values of the vast majority of Oregonians who are not hunters or anglers yet see an intrinsic value in Oregon's wildlife and want to see it protected.

Thank you for your consideration.