



**BACKCOUNTRY
HUNTERS & ANGLERS**

P.O. BOX 9257
MISSOULA, MT 59807
406.926.1908

February 6, 2024

House Committee of Natural Resources

Dear Chair, Vice Chairs, and Committee Members,

The Oregon Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers prides ourselves on being the voice for our public lands, waters and wildlife. Representing approximately 1000 dues paying members and over 4000 supporters in the state of Oregon, we urge you to support HB 4148, recognizing its multifaceted approach to addressing pressing issues concerning Oregon's wildlife and ecosystems. This comprehensive bill promises to make significant strides in enhancing wildlife conservation efforts, public education, and proactive measures against invasive species, wildlife disease, migration corridors and wildlife coexistence.

Efforts to mitigate vehicle crashes involving Oregon wildlife have demonstrated commendable success. HB 4148 seeks to build upon this momentum by bolstering technical guidance for planners and engineers involved in corridor migration projects. By providing them with updated expertise and methodologies for integrating wildlife crossing features, we can further minimize the risks of collisions between vehicles and wildlife, thereby safeguarding both human safety and biodiversity.

Furthermore, the bill addresses the crucial need for greater public education on coexisting with wildlife and advancing humane solutions to conflicts. Establishing a program at the Department of Fish and Wildlife, as proposed in ODFW POP 113, will empower informed stewardship across the state.

Invasive species pose a significant threat to Oregon's ecosystems and economy, with potential losses amounting to billions of dollars annually. HB 4148's allocation of \$1.5 million for the Oregon Invasive Species Council reflects a proactive stance in evaluating vulnerabilities, increasing public awareness, and responding to emergencies. By addressing these threats expediently, we can mitigate the devastating impacts of invasive species on Oregon's biodiversity and economy.



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Additionally, the bill recognizes the critical role of the Oregon Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (OVDL) in safeguarding public health and wildlife wellbeing. By allocating \$3.5 million for essential equipment and capacity enhancements, HB 4148 enables the OVDL and the state Wildlife Health Lab to effectively combat emerging threats such as Chronic Wasting Disease and zoonotic diseases. This investment is essential for ensuring the resilience of Oregon's ecosystems and protecting both human and wildlife populations from infectious diseases.

In conclusion, we urge you to support HB 4148 and its holistic approach to wildlife conservation, public education, and proactive management of invasive species and wildlife health threats. By advancing this legislation, we can safeguard Oregon's hunting and fishing heritage for future generations.

Thank you for your time and attention to this critical matter. Please feel free to contact the Oregon Chapter of BHA if you require any further information or assistance.

Sincerely,

Chris Hager

Northwest Coordinator

Oregon Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers