

Submitter: Jane Marsh

On Behalf
Of:

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

Measure: HB4148

I am in support of HB 4148 that will improve the ability of humans and wildlife to coexist. The intent of HB 4148 to help protect wildlife, our environment, and people across Oregon by preventing human-wildlife conflicts, inspiring wildlife stewardship, supporting wildlife rehabilitation efforts, reducing wildlife collisions, and responding to wildlife disease outbreaks

I care deeply about our state's wildlife and support advancing strong programs that ensure our wild neighbors are protected. Thank you to Representative Ken Helm for introducing HB 4148.

As it stands, I feel the current outreach and education for the public concerning wildlife-human conflict/coexistence is lacking, so this can only improve. I experienced this first-hand last week when a deer was hit on Willamette Street just inside city limits at about 6PM. I was in a panic to help the poor animal as it was still alive. Tow trucks were helping the human but no one was helping the poor injured animal. My desire was to find a large mammal rescue that could help (even though I believe the deer was a juvenile). There were all closed. ODFW was closed. In fact, ODFW's "hotline" recording was no help at all – it said call your local wildlife rehabilitator! I finally called 911, out of concern that the poor animal was suffering and might even be hit again.

This experience demonstrated there is a dearth of wildlife rehabilitators in Oregon. And those helping mature large mammals are in short supply (if at all). I find this odd, given the rather rural profile of our state. When I called Chintimini Rehab in Corvallis the day following the deer accident, I was told that the State bars wildlife rescue organizations from touching injured large mammals. They did say that helping infants was OK. I don't understand why this is so. If a large animal is sedated it can be transported. I think we should be doing ALL that we can to save and protect our wildlife, since many species, if not most, are in decline. Wildlife rehabilitation centers are an invaluable resource for our community and its wildlife. The much-needed grants provided in HB 4148 would bolster their efforts to provide care for injured, sick and orphaned wildlife. I am in favor of this!

The new wildlife coexistence biologists included in this legislation would provide the public with an outlet when faced with a conflict with wildlife, allowing for the community to feel supported by their wildlife agency and for the opportunity for nonlethal strategies to be implemented, thereby saving the lives of wild animals.

HB 4148 is an opportunity to reflect Oregon's values of caring for our wild neighbors and furthering the mission of ODFW to "protect and enhance Oregon's fish, wildlife and their habitats for the use and enjoyment by present and future generations." I might add, that I don't abide the terms "use and enjoy." I feel wild animals have every right, as does nature, to exist.