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January 30, 2025

Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire

Testimony on SB 812

Submitted by: Kyle Smith, Director of Government Relations

Chair Golden, Vice Chair Nash, and Members of the Committee:

The Nature Conservancy supports the continuation of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's landowner preference program for tags to hunt for deer or elk on private property. Private lands provide critical habitat that allow wildlife to thrive alongside human development. The landowner preference program incentivizes private landowners to steward their lands in a way that promotes wildlife habitat and allows more Oregonians to have deep and meaningful connections with the land and water that sustains us all.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is a science-based, non-partisan organization committed to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. In Oregon, TNC has over 80,000 supporters and members in every community around the state, where we manage lands and waters in varied ecosystems and partner with ranchers, farmers, fishers, and environmental interests on some of the most challenging conservation issues facing people and nature.

As a large landowner in the state, TNC is allotted several LOP tags each year. In 2002, TNC started our LOP tag donation program, wherein LOP tags on TNC preserves are donated to local service organizations in the rural communities where our preserves are located. Over the life of TNC's hunt program, nearly 100 distinct entities have applied for the tags, with their common denominator being a service focus. They include groups supporting arts and music, health care and accessibility, library and literacy, museums and cultural groups, sports clubs, search and rescue, and more. These donations to local service organizations have allowed more individuals to experience TNC preserves and habitat restoration efforts firsthand, and see the on-the-ground impacts of the work we do every day.

The LOP program is an important component of TNC's stewardship efforts and we are glad to see the program continued in perpetuity through SB 812.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input.