

Submitter: Kathleen Dodge

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2980

Dear esteemed Committee members,

I am testifying in support of Measure HB 2980 which would establish a Wildlife Stewardship Program in the state of Oregon. In my 12 years working as a wildlife educator, I have witnessed the essential role that wildlife rehabilitators and educators play in protecting Oregon's wildlife while fostering a deeper understanding of our natural world.

Wildlife educators dedicate countless hours to rescuing, treating and releasing injured and orphaned animals, often relying on personal funds or limited donations to cover veterinary care, food and shelter. Likewise, wildlife educators play a crucial role in fostering public appreciation for native species while promoting coexistence and preventing human-wildlife conflicts through outreach and education programs. Despite these significant contributions, these individuals and organizations often operate with minimal financial support.

A dedicated wildlife stewardship program would provide necessary funding, training and resources to ensure that rehabilitators can continue their lifesaving work and aid educators to expand their outreach. An investment in this program would not only improve outcomes for injured wildlife but also support environmental education efforts that inspire future generations to care for and conserve Oregon's native species.

I urge you to support this important initiative and recognize the vital work of wildlife rehabilitators and educators. By funding this program, Oregon can set a precedent for responsible stewardship and demonstrate its commitment to protecting wildlife.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate your leadership on this issue and respectfully ask for your support.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Dodge
Chintimini Wildlife Center Education Co-Director