



To
House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon

Date: 01.31.2025

Sub: Testimony in support of HB 2984

Co-Chairs Helm and Owens, Vice Chair Finger McDonald and Members of the Committee

This testimony is submitted by the Oregon Wildlife Coalition in support of HB 2984 to allocate funding to the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund (OCRF) in order to support the recovery and restoration of the state's water resource, and the fish and wildlife that depend on them. Members of the Oregon Wildlife Coalition include Bird Alliance of Oregon, Cascadia Wildlands, Defenders of Wildlife, Humane Society of the United States, Humane Voters Oregon, Oregon Wild, Think Wild, Western Environmental Law Center and Willamette Riverkeeper.

OCRF's was born out a recognition in the state that our State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP), also known as the Oregon Conservation Strategy (OCS) is woefully underfunded. While OCRF was set up to help Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to implement the SWAP/OCS, it has since morphed into a grant making body that supports the implementation of SWAP/OCS by funding local grassroots groups, conservation organizations, outdoor recreation groups and ODFW in promoting conservation and recreation in the state. Funding to implement the SWAP/OCS is woefully low – for instance, only 1.79% of ODFW's 2025 Governor Recommended Budget is allocated to implementation of the SWAP/OCS, the need of supplementary funding like the OCRF becomes critical. A significant proportion of species and habitats in the SWAP/OCS have a direct linkage or dependency on water resources for food or habitat.

Since its existence from 2019, OCRF has awarded \$7.6 million to 167 projects in all eight ecoregions of the state, and a good portion of the funds were raised from private contributions, showing widespread support for OCRF among the public. OCRF has received restricted funds in the past dedicated to a specific issue area such as wildlife connectivity and addressing drought. The Drought Package funding enabled OCRF to build drought resilience in Oregon's communities by supporting several local projects that focus

on low tech process-based restoration of habitats, restore hydrology characteristics of watersheds and improve water quality and accessibility.

We urge this committee to support HB 2984 and allocate \$1.5 million to OCRF so it can continue to fulfil its vital role in helping restore our waters for Oregon's fish and wildlife, and our communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony. Please reach out to any of our coalition members if you have any further questions on this bill.

Cascadia Wildlands

Humane Society of the United States

Oregon Wild

Humane Voters Oregon

Defenders of Wildlife

Bird Alliance of Oregon

Western Environmental Law Center

Willamette Riverkeeper

Think Wild