

Submitter: Zuriel van Belle  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2980

Chair Lively, Vice Chairs Gamba and Levy, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Zuriel van Belle; I am the director of the Portland Urban Coyote Project ([portlandcoyote.com](http://portlandcoyote.com)), a community science, research, and education project based in the Portland metropolitan area. We receive around 2,000 coyote reports per year from residents of the Portland metro area. Our project acts as an urban coyote education and research hub. I am writing to express my support of HB 2980, the Wildlife Stewardship Bill.

Like many wildlife issues, coyote conflicts—often driven by misunderstanding—are not going anywhere. What is more likely is that proactive wildlife management needs will grow as the human population increases and wildlife continues to respond in complex ways.

Proactive wildlife management is at the core of our project's mission—it is an efficient and effective way to improve everyone's relationship with the wildlife all around us. Our project is volunteer-run, so we are limited in our capacity. We see the great need for more oversight, community education, and direct outreach. Organizations like ours don't have the resources to set up longer term programs that can make a bigger impact. We regularly partner with other organizations and agencies (such as ODFW, Bird Alliance of Oregon, the Humane Society of the United States, etc.). This coalition of organizations works hard to help prevent conflict and reactive management of coyotes in the metro area. But much of this work happens in snippets of borrowed time. Opportunities for better, more proactive management often slip through the cracks, forcing agencies to respond reactively.

To manage, communicate about, and prevent coyote issues in Portland, we have a loose network of organizations that work in partnership with ODFW to spread accurate information. While this collaboration has made progress, a lack of dedicated resources limits the effectiveness and consistency of these efforts. Coyote issues in urban areas are just one of the many examples of the complexity of successfully coexisting with wildlife. We need dedicated resources to focus specifically on coordinating, understanding, and pulling together loose networks like ours. Dedicated wildlife coexistence biologists and a robust Living with Wildlife program will be able to tap into the knowledge and potential of the many interested and engaged partners across the state in a way that is not currently feasible.

The Wildlife Stewardship Bill will be an important component of a robust and contemporary approach to human-wildlife conflict. HB 2980 directly addresses the need for consistent communication, coordination, and proactive management strategies across the state. Conflicts will occur with or without the resources set aside for them so it would be better to acknowledge that reality and support a strategic approach. Human-wildlife interaction has been, is, and will be a regular part of living in Oregon—let's make it a smooth and pleasant experience for all Oregonians. Please support HB 2980 and help Oregon be a leader in proactive wildlife management.

Thank you for your time.