

Submitter: Gary Lauder  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2980

Hello, my name is Gary Lauder and I am here today as a concerned citizen to testify in support of HB 2980 to Establish a Wildlife Stewardship Program.

I strongly believe that Wildlife conservation is critical to ensuring the long-term sustainability of our ecosystems and their overall health. In Oregon, we need to continue the process toward an integrated human-wildlife community by ensuring a healthy balance for all. Healthy ecosystems and biodiversity support essential ecosystem services, including clean air and water, pollination of crops, and nutrient cycling among others. Wildlife are also integral to maintaining these services like grazing, predation of grazing populations, dispersing seeds and providing the basis of a healthy food web. Wildlife conservation also offers significant economic advantages especially with protected areas that support thriving wildlife populations (incl. tourism, forest product management and local jobs). There is also a strong intrinsic value of wildlife to human well-being and many cultures have deep connections and special respect and reverence for wildlife. My passion for this subject has encouraged me to volunteer for a local wildlife rehabilitation facility, where I have learned first hand just how important the human-wildlife connection can be. Finally, I am fortunate to teach third graders about wildlife and nature. Even at this young age, these future adults understand the critical connection of wildlife to humanity.

HB 2980 takes an important step toward minimizing human-wildlife conflicts, protecting and caring for important wildlife, and ensuring a flourishing ecosystem for our future while balancing both human and wildlife needs. Please pass this important legislation.

Thank you for your leadership and the opportunity to speak.