

Submitter: Kaitlyn Kenobi

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2977

As a hotel owner and business leader in Oregon's tourism industry, I strongly support HB2977, the 1% for Wildlife initiative. Oregon's natural beauty is the backbone of our outdoor recreation and hospitality economy, drawing visitors who want to experience our forests, rivers, and wildlife. However, many of the species and habitats that make Oregon special are under serious threat. Without dedicated funding, we risk losing not only our biodiversity but also the economic engine that sustains thousands of businesses like mine. HB2977 ensures that tourism dollars contribute directly to conservation, providing a sustainable, long-term solution that protects Oregon's natural assets for future generations.

While no one loves additional taxes, this increase is a smart investment—most of it will be paid by out-of-state visitors, and at 2.5%, Oregon's lodging tax would still be one of the lowest in the country. I already allocate business funds toward conservation, but having a structured, statewide initiative ensures these efforts happen at scale. That said, I urge the state to manage this funding wisely and transparently, prioritizing real conservation impact over administrative costs. Oregon's wildlife and landscapes are worth protecting, not just for the sake of nature, but for the people, businesses, and communities that depend on them. HB2977 is a necessary step to ensure we don't take these resources for granted. I encourage you to support this bill and help secure a thriving future for both our ecosystems and our economy.