

Submitter: John Ferguson

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2977

I am writing to urge you to support HB 2977, “1 percent for wildlife”. For the past 47 years, I have spent most of my free time in the Oregon outdoors, in forests, the mountains, floating rivers, at the coast and in the high desert. Always I am searching for wildlife, not to hunt but to watch and know that a vital part of our ecosystem is here and thriving. But over the years I have witnessed that wildlife is not thriving. I see fewer and fewer animals. Climate change, loss of habitat, impacts of human intrusion, development, pollution, and resource extraction are taking huge tolls. We are in the midst of the greatest extinction event since the age of dinosaurs. In Oregon, 294 species are considered “species of greatest conservation need”.

Fees from hunting and fishing license help so-called game species. Only a paltry amount of the ODFW budget goes to help “non-game” species survive. Tourism in Oregon is driven by the beauty and recreation of our natural areas. Wildlife is a huge drawing card—from whale and bird watching at the coast, to viewing antelope and bighorn sheep in the high desert, to the chance for catching sight of bears, otters, foxes, and even the rare wolf or wolverine in our forests. It only makes sense that tourism help support the very thing they come here to see. HB 2977 would add a mere 1 percent increase to the state tourism tax.

Wildlife and their habitat are a major part of our heritage, our tourism appeal, and are vital to a healthy and thriving ecosystem. We have a duty to protect them before it is too late.