

House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

February 21, 2025

Re: HB 2977 (Funding for Conservation)

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

My name is Josiah Dean, and I am the innkeeper of the historic Balch Hotel, which is in Dufur, Oregon. I am writing today in support of HB 2977, a bill that would establish dedicated, sustainable funding for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife by raising the state transient lodging tax by 1%.

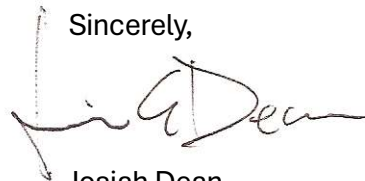
A thriving environment is critical for our state in general and for the success of our businesses specifically. Many visitors to the Balch Hotel travel from out of state to experience Oregon's natural beauty. A typical itinerary for many of our guests is a day of hiking or fishing in Wasco County before an evening of dinner at the Bistro 1907, our on-site Restaurant which features locally sourced foods.

It upsets me to learn that the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife does not have the funding to protect and recover our state's most at-risk fish and wildlife, especially those our visitors enjoy discovering. For example, our guests enjoy observing avian species such as the Loggerhead Shrike and Lewis's Woodpecker. For those who love fishing, our regional riverways are home to several varieties of Bull Trout and Salmon. Regrettably, many of these species are imperiled.

HB 2977 is a step in the right direction, and the funding it would generate – via a modest increase in our state lodging tax – would directly help at-risk species. Recovering these species through this sustained funding mechanism is a prudent investment in our natural environment and the continued success of our lodging industry.

Thank you for your time and consideration and I encourage you to support HB 2977.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Josiah Dean". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "D".

Josiah Dean  
Innkeeper  
Balch Hotel