



CONSOLIDATED OREGON INDIVISIBLE NETWORK

February 24, 2025

Re: Please vote yes on HB 2977

Dear Co-Chairs Helm and Owens, Vice Chair McDonald, and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water,

We are writing on behalf of the Consolidated Oregon Indivisible Network (COIN) to urge you to vote yes on HB 2977 in support of better funding to prevent extinction of wildlife and their habitat. COIN is made up of Indivisible groups across Oregon and has its own Climate Energy Environment (CEE) Team. The CEE Team collaborates with organizations, agencies, and groups across the Pacific Northwest to advocate, in part, for laws and programs that promote and protect our natural world. Oregon's famed wildlife and their habitats are important to healthy ecosystems and our local economies and have been disappearing in alarming numbers.

People come to our state and travel to Oregon for a variety of reasons. Many visits include outdoor activities to see wildlife and wild places that are rapidly disappearing. Increased use of Oregon's roads as well as "destination developments" have taken a toll on wildlife and their habitats.

An estimated 300 species that live in Oregon face extinction. Eleven key habitat areas are considered at risk. Biologists and other scientists are needed to monitor, manage, and restore species and their required habitats, or else local extirpations will lead to statewide extinctions. However, stunningly, programs to recover wildlife species and habitat continue to be severely underfunded.

Just a 1% increase on the transient lodging tax paid by visitors to this State would make such a difference in helping protect our wildlife and their habitats. One of the main reasons people come to our state and travel throughout Oregon is to see wildlife, yet much of wildlife is rapidly disappearing. For a \$500 payment to an Oregon lodging establishment, for example, visitors would contribute \$5 toward this crucial funding. Most of the people paying this tax would not be Oregonians. The average price of a hotel in the busy season is \$447 a night. This customer would pay \$4.47, so the total would be \$451.47; not much difference. This funding would help in mitigating the impacts of increased visitor populations. More wildlife viewing opportunities will benefit not only the wildlife but the businesses that benefit from tourism.

COIN and its members urge you to provide this stable and ongoing source of funding for these critical wildlife recovery and habitat restoration programs and vote yes on HB 2977.

Thank you for your consideration.

Monica Tomosy

Laura Allen

On behalf of COIN and the COIN CEE Team