



**BACKCOUNTRY
HUNTERS & ANGLERS**
OREGON

House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Testimony of the Oregon Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers In Support of HB 2977

On behalf of the Oregon Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers (BHA), we appreciate the opportunity to provide **support for HB 2977**, a bill that proposes a 1% increase in the transient lodging tax (TLT) to provide dedicated funding for Oregon’s State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP). This commonsense measure will ensure that critical conservation initiatives receive the sustained funding they need to protect Oregon’s wildlife, habitats, and outdoor heritage for future generations.

The Need for Dedicated Conservation Funding

Under federal law, each state is required to develop a State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP)—a comprehensive strategy that identifies species of greatest conservation need, threats to their survival, and science-based solutions to maintain healthy ecosystems. However, since Oregon’s SWAP was last updated in 2015, it has remained largely unfunded, leaving ODFW without the necessary resources to implement its proactive conservation strategies.

For too long, hunters and anglers have borne the financial burden of funding ODFW through license and tag fees. While sportsmen and women have always stepped up as conservation leaders—providing the backbone of ODFW’s budget—Oregon’s wildlife and natural resources benefit all Oregonians, including millions of visitors who travel here each year to enjoy our landscapes. HB 2977 provides a fair and sustainable solution, ensuring that tourists who come to experience Oregon’s natural beauty contribute to its long-term protection.

A Proven, Science-Based Approach



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The North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, which has successfully guided fish and wildlife management for over a century, emphasizes that wildlife is a public trust resource, managed by science, and funded by user-based contributions. HB 2977 aligns with this model by:

- **Providing stable, dedicated funding** that allows ODFW to plan and act proactively, rather than relying on sporadic appropriations.
- **Leveraging federal matching funds**, as many SWAP initiatives qualify for federal grant programs that require a state investment.
- **Supporting habitat connectivity, wildlife migration corridors, and disease monitoring**, which are essential for Oregon's game and non-game species alike.

A More Equitable Funding Model

The 1% TLT increase proposed in HB 2977 is a pragmatic and equitable way to fund conservation:

- **Capturing revenue from visitors** who come to Oregon for its natural beauty, ensuring that all who benefit contribute to conservation.
- **Providing a dedicated revenue source** that prevents the need for repeated funding battles and short-term appropriations.
- **Ensuring that Oregon's outdoor recreation economy—valued at over \$15.6 billion annually—remains strong** by safeguarding the landscapes and wildlife that drive it.

Investing in Oregon's Wildlife and Public Lands

As hunters, anglers, and conservationists, we believe that Oregon's wildlife and wild places deserve more than an unfunded plan—they deserve action. By passing HB 2977, the Legislature will secure long-term funding for proactive wildlife conservation, ensuring that ODFW can continue its vital work protecting habitat, monitoring emerging threats like chronic wasting disease (CWD) and highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), and maintaining public access to outdoor recreation opportunities.



Conclusion

The 1% for Wildlife initiative is a critical investment in Oregon's natural heritage, ensuring that all who benefit from our landscapes contribute to their stewardship. We urge the Committee to support HB 2977 and establish a dedicated funding source that upholds our state's commitment to conservation, public lands, and responsible wildlife management.

Sincerely,



Ian Isaacson | Co-Chair, Oregon Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers



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