

Submitter: Dustin Galipeau

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2977

My name is Dustin Galipeau, and I was born and raised in Bend, Oregon. I've spent my entire life exploring and appreciating the incredible landscapes and wildlife that make this state so special. Growing up here, I remember a time when the high desert felt wilder, when seeing an elk or a bald eagle was a common experience, and when the rivers and forests seemed untouched. But over the years, I have also witnessed firsthand the increasing pressures on our natural resources—more people visiting, more development, more habitat loss, and more strain on the wildlife that make Oregon such a unique and beautiful place to call home. This is all especially pronounced in my hometown of Bend.

Bend and Central Oregon have grown rapidly, drawing outdoor enthusiasts from all over the world. I understand why people want to experience our rivers, trails, and wildlife—I love them, too. But the reality is that this influx of visitors, combined with the growing impacts of climate change, wildfires, drought, and invasive species, is putting an unsustainable burden on Oregon's fish, wildlife, and habitats. We can't keep relying on the same outdated funding model and expect things to get better. That's why I strongly support House Bill 2977 – 1% for Wildlife, which would provide much-needed funding to protect and restore Oregon's imperiled species and landscapes.

I know some people are concerned about adding a tax, but this modest 1% increase would primarily be paid by visitors, not locals. With 63% of Oregon's tourists coming from out of state, this tax would ensure that those who come here to enjoy our natural resources are also helping to protect them. The average additional cost would be about \$1.15 per night for a hotel stay—less than the cost of a cup of coffee. To me, that's a small price to pay to safeguard the future of Oregon's wildlife.

I urge you to support House Bill 2977 and ensure that future generations—whether they're born and raised here, like me, or visiting for the first time—can experience the Oregon we all love.