



OREGON HUNTERS ASSOCIATION

Protecting Oregon's Wildlife, Habitat and Hunting Heritage

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House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
RE: HB 2977 Support

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

The Oregon Hunters Association (OHA) is Oregon's largest state-centric hunter conservation organization, representing over 12,000 sportsmen and women throughout 26 chapters in the state. Our mission is 'to protect Oregon's wildlife, habitat, and hunting heritage' and we strongly support science-based wildlife and habitat management.

OHA supports HB 2977.

Raising the transient lodging tax (TLT) by 1% to creates a sustained funding source specific to the implementation of the Statewide Action Plan (SWAP), previously known as the Oregon Conservation Strategy, by Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW). With approximately 300 species on the proposed list for the SWAP, the need to invest in conservation of our wildlife is imperative.

As the committee is aware, Oregon's hunters and anglers sustain ODFW by historically providing 40-55% of the agency's budget. In 2025, we are once again stepping up and supporting the fee increase outlined in HB 2342. Testimony in opposition of HB 2977 which states that ODFW's constituents are not willing to pay for these additional program needs are inaccurate. The rate-payers are supporting the increased rates and the programs which are funded by those license dollars. The confusion may come from not understanding that license dollars must be allocated to specific programs.

There must be a clear distinction between ODFW rate-payers, i.e. hunters, anglers, and commercial fishermen, and ODFW constituents. While a small percentage of Oregonians are the rate-payers for the ODFW budget, the constituency of ODFW is, in fact, all Oregonians. As wildlife is held in the public trust, every Oregonian is a constituent of ODFW's mission and work toward conservation of wildlife and their habitats.

The most straightforward option for all Oregonians assisting in ODFW's budget and paying for wildlife conservation would be an increase in the budget allocation from the General Fund (GF). However, the GF historically makes up a small percentage of ODFW's budget, approximately 10%, on average. Unfortunately, with the chronic underfunding of our natural resource agencies, and the increased financial pressures on this legislative body, the use of GF dollars is not a viable option.

The 1% increase in the TLT provides an appropriate vehicle for Oregonians, and those traveling to our beautiful state, to contribute to ODFW's mission, in lieu of the GF. It is an alternative with

a direct nexus between tourism, driven in part by the myriad activities related to Oregon's abundant fish, wildlife, natural landscapes, and investing in the conservation of those same attributes.

OHA supports the conservation efforts of ODFW and the positive effect a 1% increase in the TLT would have on the conservation of our species and habitats.

Thank you for your time,
Amy Patrick
Policy Director