



Formerly called the Humane
Society of the United States and
Humane Society International

February 25, 2025

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

RE: Testimony in Support of HB 2977

Dear Co-Chairs Helm and Owens, Vice Chair Finger McDonald, and members of the committee,

On behalf of our members and supporters in Oregon, Humane World for Animals – formerly the Humane Society of the United States – urges support of House Bill 2977. By increasing the Transient Lodging Tax by just 1%, the “1% for Wildlife” bill would provide vital funds to the Oregon Conservation Strategy, furthering essential protections for vulnerable wildlife and habitats across Oregon. Wildlife is held in public trust for all Oregonians, and Oregonians increasingly value their wildlife alive and thriving. Visitors are drawn to Oregon’s exceptional wildlife and natural landscapes, fueling our tourism and wildlife-watching industries and contributing to the state’s economy. HB 2977 would allow these industries to directly contribute to the protection of wildlife and wildlands for generations to come.

HB 2977 is supported by a broad coalition of organizations, from wildlife and land advocates to hunting and fishing groups. HB 2977 is a unique opportunity to allow so-called “nonconsumptive users” of wildlife – that is, those who participate in wildlife-related recreation without catching or killing wildlife, such as wildlife watchers, wildlife trackers, and birdwatchers – to contribute to Oregon’s urgent wildlife conservation efforts. While nonconsumptive, this wildlife-related recreation can still have an impact on wildlife habitat and populations. Likewise, outdoor recreationists such as hikers, skiers, campers, and bikers who travel to Oregon for our unparalleled landscapes and opportunities can also benefit our habitats and species. HB 2977 would provide a way for this constituency to contribute to protecting habitats and species, allowing outdoor and wildlife-related recreation to continue more sustainably.

Wildlife watchers are a huge and growing constituency in terms of number of people and dollars spent in the economy, according to data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau and put into reports by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. So-called nonconsumptive users are a rapidly growing stakeholder group who provide immense economic contributions to the communities in which they visit.¹ The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s 2022 wildlife-recreation report indicates that wildlife watchers nationwide now number 148 million – a 72% increase from 2016 (and twice as many as in 2011); wildlife watchers outnumber the total number of hunters by tenfold – and spent \$250.2 billion.² Altogether, hunters spent \$45.2 billion in 2022, about one-fifth that spent by wildlife watchers.³ The biggest increase between 2016 and 2022 was the amount wildlife watchers spent – wildlife watchers realized a 230% increase over 2016 expenditures. See Fig. 1.

What’s more, according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, more than 8 billion dollars was spent on outdoor recreation in Oregon in 2023 and contributed 2.6% in value added to the state’s GDP.⁴



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Fig. 1. USFWS National Wildlife Recreation Data (Comparison 2011, 2016 & 2022 data)⁵

Wildlife recreation participants and expenditures	2011	2016	2022	Percent increase (2016 and 2023 data)
No. wildlife watchers	71.8M	86.0M	145.3M	68.95%
No. hunters	13.7M	11.5M	14.4M	25.22%
Wildlife watcher expenditures	\$59.1B	\$75.9B	\$250.2B	229.64%
Hunter expenditures	\$36.3B	\$25.6B	\$45.2B	76.56%

The public is concerned both with the conservation and the welfare of animals, including native wildlife.⁶ According to the landmark America’s Wildlife Values report administered by the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife agencies, in Oregon the percentage of mutualists – who believe that “we should live in harmony” with wildlife– is 40 percent, an increase of 6 percent between 2004 and 2018. On the other hand, traditionalists – who “believe wildlife should be used and managed for human benefit” – make up just 27.5 percent of Oregonians, a decrease of 5.5% since 2004.⁷

In conclusion, HB 2977 would allow the growing non-consumptive outdoor and wildlife-related recreation constituency to contribute vital resources to implement the Oregon Conservation Strategy, protecting habitats and species vital to Oregon’s economy, ecosystems, and wildlife.

Sincerely,

Story Warren
Wildlife Protection Program Manager
Humane World for Animals

¹ M. L. Elbroch et al., "Contrasting Bobcat Values," *Biodiversity and Conservation* (2017); U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, "2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation: National Overview," ed. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (2017).

² U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Sep. 2023), *2022 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation*. "2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation," ed. U.S. Department of the Interior (2016); "2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation," ed. U.S. Department of the Interior (2011).

³ U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Sep. 2023), *2022 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation*.

⁴ Dept. of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis, "Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account, U.S. And Prototype for States, 2023," <https://www.bea.gov/news/2024/outdoor-recreation-satellite-account-us-and-states-2023>

⁵ U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Sep. 2023), *2022 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation*.

⁶ George et al., "Changes in Attitudes toward Animals in the United States from 1978 to 2014."

⁷ Manfredo, M. J., Sullivan, L., Don Carlos, A. W., Dietsch, A. M., Teel, T. L., Bright, A. D., & Bruskotter, J. (2018). *America’s Wildlife Values: The Social Context of Wildlife Management in the U.S*