

Good Afternoon Members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfires,

My name is Chuck Tourtillott, and I am the executive director at the Chintimini Wildlife Center in Corvallis. I regret that I was unable to attend the hearing on March 20th and so I greatly appreciate the opportunity to provide this written testimony in regards to Senate Bill 1131.

I strongly urge the support of this bill. The Chintimini Wildlife Center is a nonprofit organization located in Corvallis and is now in its 36th year of assisting sick, injured and orphaned wildlife, as well as educating our communities on wildlife conservation and natural resources stewardship. In addition, we provide a wildlife hotline, a service which received over 11,000 calls in 2024 alone.

We fulfilled an essential role during the severe wildfire season of 2020, as we received and assisted numerous wildlife patients suffering from smoke inhalation and burns. As more wildfires are a certainty, the need for CWC's services will only grow stronger. Our service area has been expanding, and we are now the only resource of its kind in the Willamette Valley.

We are expecting another busy year here at our Center, and we anticipate exceeding the number of patients we received in 2024 (2,215), and we will continue to be an essential resource for informing the public regarding procedures to take when encountering sick or injured wildlife.

We currently receive no state or federal funding, and operate only on the generosity of our community and private grants. The grant funding from this bill will allow us to elevate our outreach and education programs to a level we have been working towards for years, and create sustainable income by having an on-site Nature Center open to the public.

The Chintimini Wildlife Center has demonstrated remarkable resilience over the decades and has weathered many storms (figuratively and literally) and is worthy of this grant. It is time for CWC to advance to meet its full potential. I join the staff, volunteers, and our board of directors to ask you to pass this bill so that The Chintimini Wildlife Center can continue to be a valuable resource to our communities, our environment, and our wildlife neighbors.

Thank you!