



Testimony in Support of HB 5009 – Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Budget

Joint Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Natural Resources

Oregon State Capitol

900 Court St. NE, Salem, OR 97301

Co-Chairs Frederick and Levy, and Members of the Committee:

For the record, my name is Tristan Henry. I serve as the Oregon Field Representative for the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP), a national nonprofit coalition dedicated to guaranteeing all Americans quality places to hunt and fish.

TRCP was founded on the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation—the framework that affirms fish and wildlife as public trust resources, to be managed by professionals and funded in large part by the hunters and anglers who value them most. That model has worked for generations because it is grounded in science, accountability, and the idea that these resources belong to all of us.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) stands as one of the strongest stewards of this legacy. Whether it's responding to emerging wildlife diseases like Chronic Wasting Disease and HPAI, managing increasingly fragmented habitat, or serving an expanding community of outdoor users, ODFW remains among Oregon's most trusted agencies. The complexity of this work has grown significantly, yet the tools and resources to meet it have not always kept pace.

Our support for HB 5009 reflects an urgent need to ensure that ODFW remains whole—and, ideally, increasingly resourced. We must continue to invest in science-based management and secure long-term funding to meet today's challenges and tomorrow's conservation opportunities.

We offer the following priorities for the Committee's consideration:

Support for ODFW Rate-Payer Model and SWAP Implementation

As emphasized in our earlier testimony on HB 2342 and HB 2977, Oregon’s hunters and anglers continue to support reasonable fee increases to maintain service levels. These rate-payers also unlock tens of millions of dollars in federal matching funds through Pittman-Robertson, Dingell-Johnson, and related acts. However, rate revenue alone cannot meet the scope of today’s conservation needs. Oregon’s State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP)—formerly the Oregon Conservation Strategy—has remained an unfunded mandate since 2015. We urge continued exploration of sustainable, broad-based funding solutions to implement this vital planning document and deliver on our shared public trust responsibilities.

Support for Habitat Connectivity and Wildlife-Vehicle Collision Reduction

Legislative actions like HB 3362 and HB 2978 point toward a coordinated strategy for improving wildlife movement and reducing roadkill. These measures have earned broad stakeholder support and demonstrate how targeted investments in wildlife crossings, habitat connectivity, and interagency coordination can deliver major conservation and public safety wins. ODFW plays a central role in this work, and we ask the committee to sustain and expand the agency’s capacity to plan and implement science-based solutions.

Private Forest Accord and the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund (ORCF)

We echo the recommendations from The Nature Conservancy in supporting the continued implementation of the Private Forest Accord—a collaborative model of conservation that provides mutual benefit for landowners and wildlife. In addition, the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund (ORCF) represents a rare, bipartisan success that supports habitat restoration, recreation access, and equitable conservation programming. Please continue funding these valuable efforts within ODFW’s budget.

POP 122 – Grant Management and Federal Fund Utilization

As our partners at Oregon Wildlife Foundation rightly note, Policy Option Package (POP) 122 would improve ODFW’s grant management and ensure Oregon fully utilizes competitive federal programs. This package would support an experienced staff person to assist in grant administration—an overdue investment that will yield high returns.

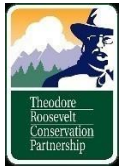
Restoration of OSP Anti-Poaching Personnel

We share the Oregon Hunters Association's deep concern about proposed cuts to Oregon State Police personnel that would impact anti-poaching enforcement. Reducing enforcement capacity undermines ODFW's broader conservation mission and the values of Oregon's hunting community. We urge restoration of this critical funding.

At a time when public trust in government can feel fragile, ODFW continues to stand out. Its science-based, service-oriented approach is a model of professionalism and effectiveness. Oregon's natural legacy, our rivers, ranges, forests, and the wildlife that inhabit them, deserves nothing less.

We respectfully urge your full support for HB 5009.

Thank you for your time and commitment to Oregon's fish, wildlife, and the people who care for them.



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