

"1% for Wildlife" (HB2977)



Randy Gicker

What This Bill Does:

- "1% for Wildlife" secures dedicated and sustained funding to conserve and recover Oregon's imperiled wildlife and habitats, which supports Oregon's thriving outdoor recreation and tourism industry.
- Establishes the Recovering Oregon's Wildlife Fund subaccount financed by an increase to the statewide Transient Lodging Tax; this fund will be nested under the Fish and Wildlife Account.
- Funding will be used to implement Oregon's State Wildlife Action Plan to conserve and recover Oregon's most vulnerable wildlife and habitat.

Why Legislators Should Support "1% for Wildlife":

- Habitat loss and degradation, climate change, invasive species, and other natural and human-made impacts are taking a toll on Oregon's birds, mammals, fish, amphibians, reptiles, butterflies, and bees. In 2015, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife identified nearly 300 species in the state at an elevated risk of extinction and 11 habitats of conservation concern.
- Unfortunately, current state funds available for implementing wildlife conservation programs are only a small fraction of what is needed to recover our state's most at-risk species. The agency tasked with overseeing critical restoration actions, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, has been woefully underfunded to address these growing challenges.
- "1% for Wildlife" is a bold, proactive solution that will help recover at-risk species now – a more efficient and cost-effective path forward rather than waiting until species are on the brink of extinction.
- The ability to effectively implement Oregon's State Wildlife Action Plan is crucial for the health of Oregon's diverse ecosystems and wildlife populations, clean water, food security, and outdoor recreation economy.
- Healthy abundant wildlife and ecosystems are an important part of Oregon's thriving -tourism industry. Outdoor recreation supports \$15.6 billion in total consumer spending supporting 224,000 full and part-time jobs in Oregon and \$9.3 billion in wages (1). Specifically:
 - Oregon's hunting, fishing, and wildlife-watching activities have accounted for \$1.2 billion in spending and have supported over 11,000 jobs in recent years (2). Additionally, these activities generated \$385 million in labor income and \$51 million in state and local taxes (3).
 - Non-consumptive use, such as nature, wildlife, forest, and wildflower observations, accounts for \$939 million of total spending (4).



The Proposed Funding Source - Oregon's Transient Lodging Tax (TLT)

- Oregon's TLT requires persons who rent overnight lodging to pay a state tax of 1.5%, a rate that is one of the lowest in the country; only Alaska and California are lower (5). Units of local government (cities and counties) may also have a lodging tax (6).
- The Portland metro region generates most of the statewide TLT revenue (44%) (7).
- Most of this tax revenue is paid by out-of-state visitors (63%) (8).
- Under Oregon law, the TLT should be used for statewide purposes (9). For example, Travel Oregon currently spends the majority of TLT on statewide and regional tourism programs. Using the TLT to fund wildlife and habitat recovery efforts aligns with the TLT's statewide purpose (10).
- This bill increases the state TLT to 2.5% generating approximately \$75 million per year, \$30 million of which will go to wildlife and habitat recovery.
- An Oregon statewide TLT rate of 2.5% would still be one of the lowest in the country; at that rate, only Alaska, and California would be lower (11).

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1. Earth Economics, *Economic Analysis Of Outdoor Recreation in Oregon* (2019), https://issuu.com/traveloregon2019/docs/economicanalysisofoutdoorrecreationinoregon_otc-ea (Page 1).
 2. Oregon Dep't of Fish & Wildlife, *Factsheet-Economic Impact OR Counties-Earth Economics* (2019), <https://www.dfw.state.or.us/agency/docs/Factsheet-Economic%20Impact%20OR%20Counties-Earth%20Economics%202019.pdf>.
 3. Oregon Dep't of Fish & Wildlife, *Factsheet-Economic Impact OR Counties-Earth Economics* (2019), <https://www.dfw.state.or.us/agency/docs/Factsheet-Economic%20Impact%20OR%20Counties-Earth%20Economics%202019.pdf>.
 4. Earth Economics, *Economic Analysis Of Outdoor Recreation in Oregon* (2019), https://issuu.com/traveloregon2019/docs/economicanalysisofoutdoorrecreationinoregon_otc-ea (Page 32).
 5. Oregon Revised Statutes 320.305, "Rate and Computation of Tax" https://oregon.public.law/statutes/ors_320.305; Oregon Revised Statutes 320.300 "ORS 320.300 Definitions for ORS 320.300 to 320.365" https://oregon.public.law/statutes/ors_320.300; *2024 HVS Lodging Tax Report – USA*, HVS (Sept. 23, 2024), <https://www.hvs.com/article/10015-2024-hvs-lodging-tax-report-usa>.
 6. *Transient Lodging Tax*, Oregon Dep't of Revenue <https://www.oregon.gov/DOR/programs/businesses/Pages/lodging.aspx>.
 7. Travel Oregon, *The Economic Impact of Travel* (April 2024), <https://industry.traveloregon.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Final-report-with-updated-clackamas-and-WV-numbers.pdf> (Page 13); Oregon Dep't of Revenue, *Oregon's State Lodging Tax, Program Description and Characteristics of Taxpayers: Calendar Years 2009-2018* (April 2019), https://www.oregon.gov/dor/programs/gov-research/Documents/state-lodging-report_604-005.pdf (Table 2.2) (Page 16).
 8. Travel Oregon, *The Economic Impact of Travel* (April 2024), <https://industry.traveloregon.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Final-report-with-updated-clackamas-and-WV-numbers.pdf> (Page 16).
 9. House Bill 2267 (2003), https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/bills_laws/archivebills/2003_EHB2267.pdf; Oregon Revised Statutes 284.131 "Commission account," https://oregon.public.law/statutes/ors_284.131.
 10. Travel Oregon, *Oregon Tourism Commission*, <https://industry.traveloregon.com/about/oregon-tourism-commission/>.
 11. *2024 HVS Lodging Tax Report – USA*, HVS (Sept. 23, 2024), <https://www.hvs.com/article/10015-2024-hvs-lodging-tax-report-usa>.