

Submitter:

Susan Strauss

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB2977

Speaking for our family of four voters, I want to express support for HB 2977 to insure conservation of wildlife and habitats that support wildlife in our state.

I walk on a daily basis for my health. I am a cancer survivor and have been advised by my doctor to walk 5 days a week. Luckily, I live near BLM and state lands. Not just for my physical health, but even more for my mental health, these walks are essential to my life. While on a walk a few days ago, my dog and I heard a barking that was mixed with a coyote yip. I knew that a coyote had a den in that area last year. I called my dog back and then the coyote presented itself to me through the trees, to be sure we didn't come nearer. It was so great to see and hear it and to have that little inter-species communication. Every walking day, I have some wonderful moment, with wildlife, with a bird, with an old growth juniper.

Everywhere I have traveled in the US and abroad, Oregon has a reputation for our beautiful habitat and unique wildlife. This can include whale watching, birding, otter spotting on our rivers or hiking in our old-growth forests. Yet, our Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) identifies nearly 300 species at elevated risk of extinction and 11 habitats of conservation concern. Current state funds are regularly insufficient to fund the agency's work to address these risks. We must and can protect this precious inheritance with the funds provided in HB 2977.