

May 8, 2025

Dear Chair Nathanson, Vice Chair Werner Reschke, Vice Chair Walters, and all Members of the House Committee on Revenue,

The Xerces Society is a national non-profit dedicated to the conservation of insects, other invertebrates, and their habitats. Oregon is where Xerces was founded and where its main operations remain today. Our biologists work on a range of species, including native bee and butterfly pollinators, beetles, and mollusks. **The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation supports HB 2977, which would generate much-needed funding for Oregon's Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to carry out its mission and mandate.**

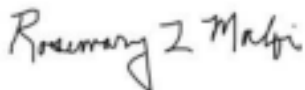
At Xerces, we focus on invertebrates because they are at the heart of a healthy environment. Invertebrates pollinate most flowering plants, including many of the fruits, vegetables, nuts, and seeds that both humans and wildlife depend on. The vast majority of birds, bats, and freshwater fish depend on invertebrates as food. Invertebrates clean our streams and rivers by filtering water, they help clean up plant, animal, and human waste, and they support food production by controlling pests. One study found that native insects are worth more than \$70 billion a year to the U.S. economy.

**Unfortunately, many insect and other invertebrate species are in trouble, with some species experiencing severe population declines;** for example, the western monarch butterfly has declined by 95% since the 1990s and the once-common western bumble bee has declined by 90% since the early 2000s. Indeed, over 20% of the state's SCGN species are invertebrates. In spite of the enormous importance of invertebrates for ecosystem function, it has long been the case that key sources of federal funding for wildlife agencies cannot be directly used for invertebrate conservation. For example, Pittman-Robertson funds are constrained to birds and mammals. **Passage of HB2977 would create the opportunity for ODFW to engage in increased conservation of the invertebrates that sustain our natural lands.**

People from across the country and around the world come to Oregon to experience its incredible natural beauty and its remarkable diversity of ecosystems, wildlife, and geologic wonders. Over the last several years, Oregon has annually reported record-breaking visitations to the state park system. Indeed, **outdoor recreation supports \$15.6 billion in total consumer spending, supports 224,000 full and part-time jobs in Oregon, and provides for \$9.3 billion in wages.** According to Travel Oregon, ~60% of total visitor spending came from out-of-state visitors in 2023.

Investing in ODFW will ensure that Oregon's natural heritage remains an asset for Oregonians, and a source of enjoyment for Oregon enthusiasts, now and into the future. It is more important now than ever that we set up our state wildlife agencies for success. We hope you will report HB2977 favorably out of committee.

Sincerely,



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