



## Testimony in Support of HB 2977 - 1% for Wildlife

**May 8, 2025**

House Committee on Revenue  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR

Dear Chair Nathanson, Vice-Chairs Reschke and Walters and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 2977, regarding increasing the state transient lodging tax to ensure vital funding for the protection of Oregon's wildlife and biodiversity.

KS Wild advocates for the wildlands, wildlife, and biodiversity of southwest Oregon and northwest California. We represent approximately 10,000 members and supporters across Oregon and beyond, united in our commitment to conserving our region's natural heritage.

Oregon is home to an extraordinary array of flora, fauna, and habitats. Yet, development, climate change, and other human and environmental pressures increasingly threaten these vital ecosystems. Nearly 300 species in Oregon are currently at elevated risk of extinction, and 11 key habitats have been identified as conservation priorities. To reverse these trends, we must invest boldly and proactively in species recovery and habitat protection.

HB 2977 would provide a dedicated, sustainable funding source to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to support the recovery of our most imperiled species and enhance biodiversity. Oregon's thriving outdoor recreation and tourism economy depends upon its unique natural legacy and this bill would invest in the state's efforts to protect that legacy.

The bill proposes a modest increase to the statewide Transient Lodging Tax, with funds specifically allocated to implement Oregon's State Wildlife Action Plan. According to Travel Oregon, the average nightly room rate in the state is \$115; under HB 2977, the increase would amount to just \$1.15 per night. The charge would appear on hotel bills as "Recovering Oregon's Wildlife," making it clear that visitor dollars are directly contributing to conservation efforts.

Tourism is a powerful driver of Oregon's economy. A 2023 analysis found that the outdoor recreation industry accounted for 2.6% of the state's GDP—higher than the national average. In 2019 alone, outdoor recreation contributed \$15.6 billion in consumer spending, with hunting, fishing, and wildlife watching accounting for \$1.2 billion. Visitors come to Oregon for its wild landscapes, iconic wildlife, and outdoor opportunities. It is only fair that those who benefit from these experiences also help protect them. Notably, 63% of overnight visitors are from out of state, and *even with the proposed increase, Oregon's lodging tax would remain among the lowest in the country.*

Travel Oregon has long supported stewardship initiatives to reduce the impact of recreation on natural landscapes. HB 2977 builds on this commitment by linking outdoor tourism directly to wildlife conservation funding—ensuring that economic success translates into environmental resilience.

The Klamath-Siskiyou bioregion, one of the most biodiverse areas on Earth, is home to many species found nowhere else. KS Wild is a proud member of the Southern Oregon Wildlife Crossing Coalition, which is focused on increasing wildlife connectivity across southwest Oregon. This coalition recently helped ODOT secure federal funding to construct a wildlife crossing on I-5 near Siskiyou Summit. Projects like this are vital examples of the kind of work HB 2977 can empower.

HB 2977 is a strategic, forward-looking investment in Oregon's environmental and economic future. We urge you to support the "1% for Wildlife" initiative and pass HB 2977. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael Dotson  
Executive Director  
Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center

Frances Oyung  
Program Manager  
Rogue Riverkeeper