

Submitter: Caroline Read
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2977

As your constituent and a deeply concerned Oregonian, I am writing to strongly urge you to support House Bill 2977, which proposes a modest increase to our state's transient lodging tax to fund the Recovering Oregon's Wildlife Fund. This bill represents one of the most impactful and urgently needed investments our state can make in the future of Oregon's native wildlife and natural heritage.

Oregon is home to some of the most biodiverse and ecologically unique landscapes in the nation—but that biodiversity is at serious risk. Over 300 species in Oregon are currently identified as at-risk in the Oregon Conservation Strategy. From pollinators and amphibians to birds and large mammals, many species are losing habitat and facing extinction because we have not provided the long-term funding necessary to protect and recover them.

HB 2977 is a solution we can afford and a legacy we can be proud of. By raising the state lodging tax by just 1%, we could generate up to \$30 million a year dedicated solely to wildlife recovery and habitat restoration. This funding would empower the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to implement the science-based strategies already outlined in their conservation plan. It would also enable our state to leverage additional federal dollars through programs like the Recovering America's Wildlife Act—if we have matching funds in place.

Without bold action now, the cost of inaction will be far greater. Once species disappear or habitats are lost, they are gone forever. We must act with the urgency this crisis demands. HB 2977 is a smart, sustainable, and forward-looking investment in Oregon's environment, economy, and quality of life.

Please stand up for Oregon's wildlife and support HB 2977. Our ecosystems, our outdoor traditions, and future generations depend on it.

Sincerely,
Caroline Read