



Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Bonham and Members of Committee,

My name is Joe Liebezeit, and I'm the Statewide Conservation Director for the Bird Alliance of Oregon. On behalf of our over 12,000 members and supporters we urge you to vote in support of HB 2977.

This bill represents a pivotal opportunity to secure dedicated funding for the recovery of Oregon's most imperiled fish, wildlife, and habitats. If passed, it would represent landmark legislation that not only addresses critical environmental issues but also strengthens Oregon's outdoor economy.

We understand that supporting an increase in the transient lodging tax can be a challenging request, but knowing that the funds will go towards recovering Oregon's most at-risk species and habitats ensures that we protect our state's most cherished places. Visitors and tourists from around the world pay money for lodging, food, and other fees to visit our state to view our amazing wildlife.

A recent economic analysis by Resources and Communities Research and Consulting found that an increase in TLT as proposed by HB 2977 would:

- Have no impact on spending based on evidence from comparable states. Higher lodging tax rates do not negatively impact lodging spending or outdoor recreation's contribution to our state's GDP
- Oregon still would maintain one of the lowest lodging tax rates in the region, with the proposed increase rate that is one of the lowest in the country; only Alaska and California are lower
- The bulk of the in-state TLT revenue would be from out-of-state visitors (63%)

I also want to point out that Bird Alliance of Oregon has worked on some of these initiatives for decades but we are now the closest we've been in getting them across the finish line. Bob Sallinger, the former conservation director at Bird Alliance of Oregon, and my supervisor for over 10 years, championed the wildlife stewardship effort for years and also worked tenaciously but unsuccessfully on various efforts like a bird seed tax to get needed funds to non-game conservation. Passage of this legislation would honor Bob Sallinger's incredible legacy of Oregon conservation and ultimately benefit all Oregonians.

Please support HB 2977!

Thank you, Joe Liebezeit