



Senate Committee on Rules
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

June 24, 2025

Re: HB 2977 (Increases the state transient lodging tax)

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

My name is Danielle Moser, and I am the Wildlife Program Manager for Oregon Wild. On behalf of our 20,000 members and supporters, we strongly support HB 2977 A.

What problem is HB 2977 trying to solve?

Growing challenges like habitat loss, climate change, and human-caused impacts are putting Oregon's native species and their habitats at risk. There are over 300 species that are imperiled. And that has real, direct impacts - not just on fish and wildlife, but also on the livelihoods of our communities, the recreation economy, and our natural heritage.

Unfortunately, the state lacks long-term, dedicated funding for recovering imperiled species. It's a problem that we have been trying to solve for over a decade - meanwhile, fish, wildlife and the habitats they depend on continue to decline. What we need is consistent, sufficient, and reliable funding - something the General Fund has been unable to do, and a problem federal funding cuts will exacerbate.

Why the statewide TLT?

First, nature and wildlife are inextricably linked to tourism.

The state has done a spectacular job showcasing and promoting what we love about Oregon, what makes it special, and why people should visit. Whale watching on the coast, birding in the Klamath, fishing in Rogue or hunting in the Steens: this state has it all. While we welcome tourists and want them to enjoy Oregon's splendor, we also have to make sure that we invest, at scale, back into this resource that attracts visitors to our state.

Second, the statewide TLT is not a cost-of-living inflator. 65% of the revenue comes from out-of-state visitors. Furthermore, even with this proposed 1.25 percentage point increase, which would bring in about \$40 million/year, Oregon would still maintain one of the lowest TLTs in the country.

Finally, I would like to highlight news out of Hawaii: Last month, their legislature approved an increase in their TLT for environmental protection - and this coming from the state with the third highest TLT in the country. According to an AP story, "Green, the governor, argued the increase was small enough that tourists would not feel much of a difference. The more you cultivate good environmental policy, and the more you invest in perfecting our lived space, the more likely it is we're going to have actual lifelong, committed travelers to Hawaii."

We believe the same goes for Oregon, which is why we urge you to pass HB 2977 - a historic bill that will have long-lasting impacts for Oregon's iconic fish, wildlife, and habitats.