



Formerly called the Humane  
Society of the United States

June 24, 2025

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

**RE: Testimony in Support of HB 2977A**

Dear Chairs Jama, Vice-Chair Bonham, and members of the committee,

On behalf of our members and supporters in Oregon, Humane World for Animals – formerly the Humane Society of the United States – urges support of House Bill 2977A. This bill would provide vital funds to the Oregon Conservation Strategy, furthering essential protections for vulnerable wildlife and habitats across Oregon. In addition, HB 2977A will provide the resources needed to establish the Wildlife Stewardship Program within ODFW. Visitors are drawn to Oregon’s exceptional wildlife and natural landscapes, fueling our tourism and wildlife-watching industries and contributing to the state’s economy. What’s more, communities need assistance now more than ever to prevent and reduce human-wildlife conflicts. HB 2977A would provide for protection of wildlife, wildlands, and communities for generations to come.

**1) HB 2977A provides essential funding for reduction of human-wildlife conflict.**

Humane World for Animals has been a steadfast supporter of ODFW’s Wildlife Stewardship Program from the beginning, having served on the Wildlife Response Taskforce that brought forward this important initiative that invests meaningfully in resources that reduce human-wildlife conflicts, inspire wildlife stewardship and responsibility, and conserve Oregon’s wildlife.

As an organization, we work to provide animal care and control professionals, law enforcement, shelters, wildlife rehabilitation centers and any other agency or organization taking calls from the public with the tools needed to help address conflicts with wildlife humanely and effectively. These responders play a crucial role in equipping the public with information on how to share space with wild animals in a way that protects all involved. Humane World for Animals also works to provide the public with information about how to live with wildlife and we recognize the need for greater public awareness that wild animals are a part of our communities.

Preventing these conflicts from occurring in the first place benefits Oregonians, wildlife, and the local responding agencies. By providing information and educational opportunities to help people make appropriate decisions, the Wildlife Stewardship Program will reduce the likelihood of problems becoming exacerbated, therefore minimizing financial and other costs.

The Wildlife Stewardship Program will also provide much needed support for our state’s wildlife rehabilitator organizations—who all operate as nonprofits—and who are equally committed to caring for and helping to conserve Oregon’s wildlife while also serving as a hands-on resource for their local communities and fielding thousands of calls each year for help and guidance.



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**2) HB 2977A provides an opportunity to mitigate the impacts of outdoor recreation.**

HB 2977A is supported by a broad coalition of organizations, from wildlife and land advocates to hunting and fishing groups. HB 2977A is a unique opportunity to allow so-called “nonconsumptive users” of wildlife – that is, those who participate in wildlife-related recreation without catching or killing wildlife, such as wildlife watchers, wildlife trackers, and birdwatchers – to contribute to Oregon’s urgent wildlife conservation efforts. While nonconsumptive, this wildlife-related recreation can still have an impact on wildlife habitat and populations. Likewise, outdoor recreationists such as hikers, skiers, campers, and bikers who travel to Oregon for our unparalleled landscapes and opportunities can also benefit our habitats and species. HB 2977A would provide a way for this constituency to contribute to protecting habitats and species, allowing outdoor and wildlife-related recreation to continue more sustainably.

Wildlife watchers are a huge and growing constituency in terms of number of people and dollars spent in the economy, according to data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau and put into reports by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. So-called nonconsumptive users are a rapidly growing stakeholder group who provide immense economic contributions to the communities in which they visit.<sup>1</sup> The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s 2022 wildlife-recreation report indicates that wildlife watchers nationwide now number 148 million – a 72% increase from 2016 (and twice as many as in 2011); wildlife watchers outnumber the total number of hunters by tenfold – and spent \$250.2 billion.<sup>2</sup> Altogether, hunters spent \$45.2 billion in 2022, about one-fifth that spent by wildlife watchers.<sup>3</sup> The biggest increase between 2016 and 2022 was the amount wildlife watchers spent – wildlife watchers realized a 230% increase over 2016 expenditures. See Fig. 1.

What’s more, according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, more than 8 billion dollars was spent on outdoor recreation in Oregon in 2023 and contributed 2.6% in value added to the state’s GDP.<sup>4</sup>

**Fig. 1. USFWS National Wildlife Recreation Data (Comparison 2011, 2016 & 2022 data)<sup>5</sup>**

Wildlife recreation participants and expenditures	2011	2016	2022	Percent increase (2016 and 2023 data)
<b>No. wildlife watchers</b>	71.8M	86.0M	145.3M	68.95%
<b>No. hunters</b>	13.7M	11.5M	14.4M	25.22%
<b>Wildlife watcher expenditures</b>	\$59.1B	\$75.9B	\$250.2B	229.64%
<b>Hunter expenditures</b>	\$36.3B	\$25.6B	\$45.2B	76.56%

Oregonians value our wildlife and the opportunity to live alongside wildlife. According to the landmark America’s Wildlife Values report administered by the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife agencies, in Oregon the percentage of mutualists – who believe that “we should live in harmony” with wildlife– is 40 percent, an increase of 6 percent between 2004 and 2018. On the other hand, traditionalists – who “believe wildlife should be used and managed for human benefit” – make up just 27.5 percent of Oregonians, a decrease of 5.5% since 2004.<sup>6</sup>



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## Conclusion

HB 2977A would allow the growing non-consumptive outdoor and wildlife-related recreation and travel constituency to contribute vital resources to protect habitats and species vital to Oregon's economy, ecosystems, and wildlife. HB2977A would also establish the Wildlife Stewardship Program within ODFW, providing communities across Oregon with the assistance they need to live alongside wildlife. We are thrilled to be a part of a broad and diverse group of stakeholders in support of HB 2977A and respectfully urge you to support this bill.

Sincerely,

Story Warren  
Wildlife Protection Program Manager  
Humane World for Animals

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<sup>1</sup> M. L. Elbroch et al., "Contrasting Bobcat Values," *Biodiversity and Conservation* (2017); U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, "2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation: National Overview," ed. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (2017).

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Sep. 2023), *2022 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation*. "2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation," ed. U.S. Department of the Interior (2016); "2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation," ed. U.S. Department of the Interior (2011).

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Sep. 2023), *2022 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation*.

<sup>4</sup> Dept. of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis, "Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account, U.S. And Prototype for States, 2023," <https://www.bea.gov/news/2024/outdoor-recreation-satellite-account-us-and-states-2023>

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Sep. 2023), *2022 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation*.

<sup>6</sup> Manfredo, M. J., Sullivan, L., Don Carlos, A. W., Dietsch, A. M., Teel, T. L., Bright, A. D., & Bruskotter, J. (2018). *America's Wildlife Values: The Social Context of Wildlife Management in the U.S*