

OPINION

Readers respond: Boost lodging tax for wildlife spending

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By [Letters to the editor | The Oregonian](#)

Oregon is home to incredible wildlife and the habitats those animals rely on — from wild salmon in our rivers and iconic birds in the Klamath refuges to gray whales migrating along the coast. These species and landscapes define Oregon's natural beauty and fuel our tourism economy.

But our native wildlife is in trouble. The [Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has identified nearly 300 species at risk](#), some even in danger of extinction. Unfortunately, the agency tasked with protecting them lacks the resources to do so.

That's why [HB 2977](#) — known as "1% for wildlife" — is so important. This bill would provide critical funding for fish, wildlife and habitat recovery by increasing the statewide lodging tax from 1.5% to 2.5%. Even with this change, Oregon would still have one of the lowest lodging taxes in the nation.

This modest investment would support the very resources that attract visitors and contribute billions to our state's economy.

According to economic analysts, "fish, wildlife and habitat investments that improve quality of life and visitor amenities will not decrease tourism spending. It is more likely that HB 2977 will lead to faster growth in visitor spending and a larger outdoor recreation economy in Oregon."

"1% for wildlife" is a commonsense solution that benefits both our natural heritage and our economy. This bill is currently in the Oregon House Revenue Committee, chaired by Rep. Nancy Nathanson. A coalition of conservation and outdoor recreation organizations encourages the committee and Oregon House leadership to pass this bill.

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