



June 24, 2025

Dear Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Bonham, and Members of the Senate Committee on Rules,

Surfrider Foundation's Oregon Chapter network strongly supports HB 2977, which would modestly increase the state's transient lodging tax by 1.25% to fund conservation of Oregon's wildlife and habitats—including marine species and coastal ecosystems managed through ODFW's Nearshore Conservation Strategy. Surfrider represents thousands of Oregonians that regularly travel and visit the coast for non-consumptive recreation (activities other than fishing and hunting like surfing, beachgoing, scenic enjoyment, wildlife viewing, etc.) specifically because of our iconic natural resources, wild coastlines, ecosystems, and well-managed species.

As an individual living in a coastal community with a high dependence on both commercial and recreational fishing but also on tourism, I can attest first hand to the discrepancy in revenue between these activities. Representing non-consumptive recreational interests on Oregon's Ocean Policy Advisory Council for over 8 years, I can also attest to the natural resource management expectations of non-consumptive recreational users, largely which are tourists and visitors of the coast. In fact, Surfrider conducted [a study in 2011](#) to further investigate these types of non-consumptive coastal recreation activities, where they are occurring and what their economic contributions were to the state. This study revealed a significant economic impact and that coastal visitors' activities not only depend on critical conservation, wildlife and intact habitats and ecosystems, but their decision to visit and travel to the coast in the first place is motivated by these same factors. It is the quality of the experience. Some other highlights, relevant to who is visiting the coast and for what purposes:

- Over **80% of Oregon residents visited the coast** in the year prior to the study.
- About **88% of those trips were primarily for recreation other than fishing/hunting** -the study focused on activities like beach going, surfing, kayaking, wildlife viewing, and hiking/biking.
- The estimated **\$2.4 billion in expenditures** represents direct spending by visitors on items such as accommodation, food, and recreation-related goods and services.

Despite these significant economic contributions and natural resource dependent tourists activities, these visitors are not generating revenue for the management of the critical resources they depend on unless they purchase a hunting or fishing license. This bill ensures those coastal visitors and tourists benefiting from Oregon's beauty help sustain it—by reinvesting in the habitats and species that define our coast. With nearly 300 species at risk and chronic underfunding of conservation efforts, HB 2977 is a smart, proactive solution. It offers a reliable funding source for protecting ecosystems and supporting coastal resilience, while keeping Oregon's lodging tax among the lowest in the nation. We urge your support for this strategic and future-focused investment.

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