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Oregon's wildlife is in trouble. With nearly 300 wildlife species at risk of extinction and 11 vital habitats in decline, urgent action is needed to protect the state's rich natural heritage. House Bill 2977, the "1% for Wildlife" bill, offers a smart, forward-thinking solution by slightly increasing the statewide lodging tax to fund conservation efforts.

The bill proposes raising the state's transient lodging tax from 1.5% to 2.5%, with the added revenue directed to the Recovering Oregon's Wildlife Fund. This dedicated funding stream would support the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife in restoring habitats and protecting vulnerable species—actions essential not only for wildlife, but for the health of Oregon's ecosystems as a whole.

Importantly, even with this increase, Oregon would still have the third-lowest statewide tourism tax in the nation. Tourists who enjoy Oregon's natural beauty contribute a small amount more, helping to ensure these landscapes and species endure for future generations.

This modest investment supports not just wildlife, but also rural economies and outdoor recreation, which depend on a thriving natural environment. Passing HB 2977 would be a meaningful step toward responsible stewardship of the lands and species that make Oregon truly special.

Sustainable funding for wildlife is long overdue. Now is the time to act. Now is the time for Oregonians to contact their legislators and speak up in support of this critical conservation effort.

Wade Nagy