

Submitter: CindyLynn Swatland
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2977

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

I am writing to urge you to support HB 2977, a bill to secure long-term, dedicated funding to recover Oregon's most imperiled fish, wildlife, and habitats.

Oregon is an incredibly special place--home to a diverse array of flora, fauna, and the habitats that support them. Unfortunately, climate change and other natural and human-made impacts put their future at risk.

There are nearly 300 species of greatest conservation need and 11 habitats of conservation concern. To combat this – and ensure all species thrive in Oregon – we need bold, proactive investments in their recovery. The bill also allocates funds for wildlife stewardship, Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund, anti-poaching efforts, wildlife connectivity, and invasive species control--all of which further bolster wildlife conservation in the state.

HB 2977 would do just that by providing a steady, sustainable source of funds to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to recover Oregon's those species and habitats that are most at-risk, while enhancing biodiversity – all of which contribute to Oregon's tourism and outdoor recreation economy.

The Wildlife Coalition hired an outside economic consultant to do an analysis and found the tax increase proposed in HB 2977 would have no impact on tourism spending, based on evidence from comparable states. Higher lodging tax rates do NOT negatively impact lodging spending or outdoor recreation's contribution to our state's GDP. Oregon still would maintain the 3rd lowest lodging tax rates in the country (only Alaska and California are lower). The majority--63%--of the in-state lodging tax revenue would be from out-of-state visitors.

Please support HB 2977 today!

Sincerely,
CindyLynn Swatland