



June 24, 2025

Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Bonham, and committee members,

On behalf of Cascadia Wildlands and our 15,000 members and supports, we ask you to vote yes on HB 2977, 1% for Wildlife.

For many years, the vagaries of the biennial general fund budgeting process and competing pressures for limited funds has impeded ODFW's ability to carry out our State Wildlife Action Plan. Biennium after biennium we have seen the conservation portion of the agency's mandate be deprioritized and underfunded. For example, this year, as part of the required 10% GRB reduction effort, the agency was asked for a list of cuts to its proposed budget – among other reductions, the agency cut the PoP for very much needed additional wolf coexistence biologist and proposed cutting a portion of the anti-poaching funds. The GRB then cut the anti-poaching funds allocated to Oregon State Police as well as all funds to ODFW, for a total cut of \$1,279,084 - zeroing out anti-poaching funding entirely in the middle of a poaching crisis. Agency biologists have lots of good ideas, but they do not have adequate resources – or staffing, to achieve our state's conservation goals. This bill will fill these important funding gaps, among others, and ensure we do not experience similar shortfalls in the future.

Ensuring we have adequate, sustained and reliable funding over time for wildlife and habitat conservation and recovery is made even more essential by the cuts to federal agencies and attacks on conservation at the national level. We cannot count on the federal government to safeguard imperiled species in Oregon – we need to take responsibility. Ensuring Oregon's wildlife and unique habitats are conserved and may remain a draw for tourists is a good investment in our robust tourism and recreation economies.

I grew up in Senator Golden's district and now live in Senator Manning's, both communities where wildlife and their habitats drive the tourism economy. As an individual, I am happy to pay an extra dollar or two per night when I visit the coast, the Gorge or eastern Oregon, and am thrilled to know that small extra fee will be dedicated to the suite of important programs funded through this bill.

Please support HB 2977 so that our state secures long-term, sustainable funding for conservation and recovery of our state's most imperiled wildlife and fish species and their habitats. Let's honor Bob Sallinger's legacy and support this important bipartisan bill.

Thank you,

Bethany Cotton
Conservation Director
Cascadia Wildlands