

Submitter: Jack Williams

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2977

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 2977 and the ability to increase transient lodging tax for the benefit of wildlife.

I strongly support this bill. There are many badly needed funding opportunities for fish, wildlife and their habitats in HB 2977 that currently receive little support. Ironically, wildlife and the natural beauty of our state attracts many tourists and short-term visitors that stay in lodging and would be subject to the transient lodging tax. Thus, the tax has some clear benefits for those being taxed and increases the potential for future trips. The tax works to maintain the natural beauty that visitors appreciate.

I am particularly glad to see provisions to help fund wildlife connectivity. Since 2021, I have been working with the Southern Oregon Wildlife Crossing Coalition on several wildlife crossing projects, including a large wildlife bridge along Interstate-5 just north of the California border. The bridge will be a certain noticeable reminder to those entering the state that Oregonians and those that visit the state value natural beauty, resource protection, and safe travel experiences. These state funds also will help us successfully compete for federal and foundation dollars as matches in outside grant opportunities. Thus the funding benefits of the legislation greatly exceeds face value.

This is a good bill for Oregon, our residents, our wildlife, and those that come to visit and explore the state. Please pass this bill.

Jack Williams  
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