

Submitter: Kyle Collins  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2977

Dear members of the legislature,

I am writing to confirm my ongoing support for HB 2977. The wildlife and natural habitats that support them are among our most valuable resources here in Oregon. We are lucky to live in an extremely diverse state with significant stretches of intact landscapes that draw visitors, contribute to local economies, and sustain clean water supplies for a large percentage of our population. Of course we welcome visitors to our state, but unfortunately many of our most significant natural areas such as the Columbia Gorge, the Cascades, and the Coast have begun to experience wildlife declines and habitat reduction from overuse, high volumes of visitor traffic on our roadways, and unintended consequences such as increased wildfire ignitions. Additionally, these wildlife resources need stable and ongoing financial support to begin recovery and maintain these precious features in our region. HB 2977 proposes a very modest funding solution given the needs, by raising the statewide lodging tax just 1.25 percent. Given that many impacts to our wildlife populations can be direct or indirectly tied to increasing numbers of visitors, this is a sensible long-term funding solution that will take meaningful steps to increasing wildlife populations, restoring degraded habitats, and maintaining a significant draw for people hoping to visit Oregon. I urge you to pass this bill.

Respectfully,  
-Kyle Collins, Bend, OR