

Submitter: Katherine Luscher
On Behalf Of: Seabird Institute
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2977

Chair Jama, Vice-Chair Bonham and Members of Committee,

My name is Katherine Luscher and I am the Tufted Puffin Coordinator with National Audubon Society's Seabird Institute. I am an Oregonian and I am writing today in support of House Bill 2977.

The Tufted Puffin – listed here in Oregon as Species of Greatest Conservation Need - is an iconic seabird that has seen a drastic decline along the Oregon coast, from an estimated 5000 birds in the 1980s, to just 553 birds in 2021. The puffin only comes to our offshore rocks and islands to breed during the summer, drawing tourists and wildlife enthusiasts to coastal Oregon, and helping to fuel the economy of our communities. In fact, at low-tide, Haystack Rock in Cannon Beach hosts the largest onshore population of Tufted Puffins in the continental United States – making it the premier spot outside of Alaska to view the seabird.

To address the drastic population decline of the Tufted Puffin in Oregon, a group of agencies, nonprofits and researchers finalized Oregon's first Conservation Action Plan for Tufted Puffins. This 10-year plan, with an overall goal of 'halting the decline,' includes a list of priority actions that we hope to implement to ensure we have puffins in Oregon for generations to come – but to do so properly requires dedicated resources.

If passed, House Bill 2977 will help provide the consistent funding we need to stop the decline of the Tufted Puffin, as well as many other species, here in Oregon – species that are important for the health of our ecosystems and our economy.

Thank you!
Katherine Luscher