



**OREGON CHAPTER
OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY**
PO Box 2378
Corvallis, OR 97339

March 12, 2019

FROM: The Oregon Chapter of The Wildlife Society

TO: House Committee on Natural Resources

SUBJECT: Support for HB 2829

Chair Witt and committee members,

The Oregon Chapter of The Wildlife Society is writing to express our strong support for HB 2829. HB 2829 builds an essential foundation to sustain Oregon's fish and wildlife heritage for future generations. The creation of a funding framework is a critical component for continued efforts to develop a sustainable funding model for Oregon's fish and wildlife management.

The Wildlife Society is an international organization founded in 1937, representing nearly 10,000 professionals, including scientists, managers, educators, technicians, planners, consultants, conservation officers, students and others who manage, conserve, and study wildlife populations and habitat. In Oregon, the Oregon Chapter of The Wildlife Society (ORTWS) represents nearly 500 such professionals from many areas of public and private enterprise.

Our mission is to promote wise conservation and management of wildlife resources in Oregon by serving and representing natural resource professionals. A central purpose of ORTWS is to support scientifically sound management policies.

Like many other state natural resource agencies, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) contends with an enormous public trust responsibility to manage fish and wildlife and their habitats across private, state, and federal ownership boundaries. Additionally, this duty includes the stewardship of both game and non-game wildlife populations, over 850 species, held in the public trust. Traditional past funding for management of the public trust has relied largely on revenue generated by sportsmen and women, without substantial support from the general public.

In 2017, the Governor's Task Force on Funding for Fish, Wildlife and Related Outdoor Recreation and Education (HB2402) was convened to address this issue and develop funding proposals to produce a sustainable, broad-based revenue source to meet ODFW's current and future conservation challenges. While this fund seeks to address ODFW's existing programs and obligations, it also is intended to fund the implementation of the Oregon Conservation Strategy.

The Oregon Conservation Strategy is Oregon's [State Wildlife Action Plan](#). These plans serve as the blueprint for conserving our nation's fish and wildlife and preventing endangered species. Oregon's Strategy was developed by a partnership of numerous agencies, conservation groups and industry stakeholders and represents a collaborative

and proactive strategy for maintaining and restoring Oregon's fish and wildlife and their habitats. Core targets of the Oregon Conservation Strategy include, but are not limited to:

- Monitor and proactively conserve at-risk species
- Maintain and restore critical habitats and the wildlife they support
- Assess and manage the impacts of climate change and wildfire risks
- Assess and manage the impacts of population growth and development pressures on Oregon's wildlife and habitats
- Expand recreational resources, outreach, and other programs, to a broader spectrum of Oregon citizens
- Continue to build and strengthen hunting and fishing opportunities and programs

In order to adequately fund and implement the Oregon Conservation Strategy, ODFW requires new, diversified, and sustainable sources of revenue to supplement existing funding. Establishing an Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund is a critical first step in providing the department with a vehicle to receive and expend revenues dedicated to conservation, management, research, habitat improvements, enforcement, outdoor recreation, education and other activities that serve to protect, maintain or enhance the fish and wildlife resources of Oregon.

Furthermore, the timely creation of this fund will serve as a match for revenues from federal legislation, including The Recovering America's Wildlife Act, which dedicates \$1.3 billion annually in existing revenue from the development of energy and mineral resources on federal lands and waters to the Wildlife Conservation Restoration Program.

Funds in this program are distributed to the state fish and wildlife agencies based on a formula, and Oregon would be able to access approximately *\$52 million per biennium* for implementation of the Oregon Conservation Strategy.

On behalf of ORTWS Members and Board, thank you for your time and consideration in this matter and please do not hesitate to contact us with questions or to engage further discussion.

Respectfully,

ORTWS Board of Directors

ORTWS Contacts for HB 2829:

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