



Oregon

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Department of Fish and Wildlife

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To: The Honorable Brad Witt, Chair
House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee



**Testimony by
Curt Melcher, Deputy Director
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
HB 2252**

Good morning Chair Witt and members of the committee. My name is Curt Melcher, Deputy Director of Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. I appreciate the opportunity to provide you testimony on HB 2252, which benefits active duty military personnel, businesses, and hunters and anglers

House Bill 2252 shows our appreciation to active duty military personnel by allowing them to hunt or fish in Oregon for the same cost as an Oregon resident. The legislation applies to Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, National Guard or reservists currently stationed at any base or facility in Oregon, the United States or any foreign country. Members of the military service will be considered Oregon residents for the purpose of purchasing an Oregon hunting or fishing license, tag or permit.

Although HB 2252 reduces the cost for military personnel on active duty to hunt or fish in Oregon, it will not affect hunting or fishing opportunities for Oregon residents. Controlled hunt tags issued to members of the military who are not Oregon residents will be drawn from the tags allocated for purchase by non-residents. Additionally, this approach will not affect the department's receipt of any federal funds related to the sale of fishing or hunting licenses. The department believes this proposal is a fitting tribute to the sacrifices made by our nation's military personnel.

HB 2252 also benefits businesses selling hunting and fishing licenses by increasing the vendor fee collected when selling non-resident licenses and tags. By statute, license vendors receive \$1.00 for each license document sold, regardless of the cost of the license or tag. However, credit and debit card transaction fees are based on the price of the item purchased. When a license vendor accepts a credit or debit card for the purchase of a non-resident license or tag, the transaction fee charged by the bank can exceed the amount the vendor receives for selling the license or tag. Increasing the vendor fee on non-resident licenses and



tags to more accurately reflect credit card transaction fees will ensure license vendors do not lose money on these sales.

HB 2252 also ensures that license vendors are fairly compensated for the time involved in selling a juvenile sportspac. When a customer purchases either an adult or a juvenile sportspac, they are issued nine license documents. Because the documents are purchased as one transaction, the vendor receives one vendor fee for all nine documents instead of a fee for each separate document. The vendor fee for the juvenile sportspac is \$2.00, while the vendor fee for the adult sportspac is \$5.00. Raising the vendor fee for a juvenile sportspac to \$5.00 will bring it into alignment with the adult sportspac and will properly compensate license vendors for their efforts.

HB 2252 also authorizes the Fish and Wildlife Commission to issue multi-year hunting and fishing licenses. These licenses have proven to be popular with hunters and anglers in the states that sell such licenses. For example, Pennsylvania and Iowa began selling multiyear fishing licenses earlier this year. As of late January, more than ten percent of all resident license sales in those states were multiyear licenses. Customers appreciate being able to purchase a license one year and not having to worry about renewing for a number of years. Additionally, transaction fees are lower since customers pay for purchasing only one license, rather than multiple licenses. If passed, HB2252 would make Oregon one of nearly a dozen states that sell multiyear licenses.

States offering multiyear licenses find them effective at retaining hunters and anglers. Many hunters and anglers purchase a license one year, but do not purchase a license in subsequent years. Over a five year period, less than 40 percent of Oregon hunters purchase a license every year. Similarly, just over fifty percent of anglers purchase every year over a five year period. Multiyear licenses will reduce the likelihood that a hunter or angler may decide not to participate because they forgot to renew their license.

HB 2252 also benefits the agency by stabilizing federal funding from year to year. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service distributes federal funds to states based, in part, on the number of fishing and hunting licenses sold in a state each year. The Service counts multiyear licenses in each year they are valid. Multiyear licenses would reduce the fluctuation in license sales from year to year and could result in an overall increase in federal funds available for fish and wildlife management.

In closing, the department asks for your support for HB 2252 which benefits military personnel, businesses, hunters, anglers and fish and wildlife management in Oregon.

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