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I submit this statement in favor of HB 4046.

I am a member of the International Board of Directors of WildAid, one of the world's leading conservation organizations dedicated to reducing the demand for endangered species' parts in Asia and throughout the world. Our motto is "When the buying stops, the killing can, too." This bill furthers the goals of WildAid and protects Oregon's wildlife in important ways.

HB 4046 adds significant and meaningful enforcement measures to existing laws designed to protect Oregon's wildlife from poachers. When I first approached Representative Helm concerning this issue I did so because I felt that there was little in the existing laws that would make a poacher think seriously about the consequences of an illegal taking of Oregon's wildlife. Of specific concern for me was the poaching of bears and cougars whose body parts were being removed and transported to Asian markets where they were sold as traditional medicine, aphrodisiacs and pathetic trinkets. Evidence of mass bear poaching with the gallbladders of those poached bears removed, consolidated and transported to Asia was being reported which suggested that the problem was probably larger than most anyone recognized. Yet, in reviewing the penalties for anyone caught smuggling bear gallbladders, or bear paws, or cougar bones, with the intent of selling those animal parts in the Asia, it was clear that the penalties needed to be strengthened. This bill strengthens those penalties significantly.

Now that the House has passed this important bill, I urge this committee to recommend a do pass vote in the full senate. For Oregon to take action as contemplated in this bill is not without precedence. Oregon helped lead the way nationally and internationally with our 2011 ban on the sale of shark fin (a bill sponsored by Chair Witt). Shortly after we banned the sale of shark fin, California followed suit and within six months of that the Chinese government banned shark fin soup from all official State functions. Since 2011 demand for shark fin soup has declined by 50 to 70 percent in China, the price of shark fin in China has plummeted and it is reported that sharks are less likely to be targeted by fishermen as a result. This bill specifically identifies bear gallbladders, paws and sex organs as parts that may not be the sole parts removed and utilized from a bear carcass. It also specifically bans the exportation of unlawfully taken wildlife. Both of these provisions demonstrate that Oregonians understand the insidious nature of the international animal parts black market. Both of these provisions demonstrate that Oregon is willing to take a stand against these immoral practices.

What this bill does is again tell would be poachers that Oregon values its wildlife and that we will take action necessary to ensure our wildlife's survival. This bill will lead to greater protection of Oregon's wildlife and will signal to the rest of the world that we are ready to punish, severely, those poachers who consider Oregon another stop on the international wildlife black market. Thank you.