



OREGON HUNTERS ASSOCIATION

Protecting Oregon's Wildlife, Habitat and Hunting Heritage

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Chair Clem and Members of the House Agriculture and Natural Resource Committee:

I am Al Elkins representing the Oregon Hunters Association (OHA). I am here today to talk about HB 3228 and voice the concerns about the bill from our board. At this time, the OHA Board of Directors has taken a "nonsupport" position on the bill. This bill alters the essential core of fish and wildlife policy in our State. Changes can have far reaching consequences to things that we cherish and treasure.

OHA believes that the bill as currently written would change wildlife management policy by removing the existing second policy in ORS 496.012 which states: "and to provide the optimum recreational benefits". The bill would shift state policy from the current balance of two policies:

- (1) Wildlife species needs, and
- (2) of man's multiple, recreational uses of wildlife species, which includes aesthetic benefits in current policy.

In essence, this language change would reduce the wildlife management policy to a singular focus where only "serious depletion of any indigence species" will be considered. This is unacceptable to the thousands of sportsmen and women who not only pay to support ODFW programs, but who also donate time and money to countless projects that benefit a wide variety of wildlife species.

We believe that overall HB 3228 would in fact:

- Reduce the importance and consideration of traditional, recreational and conservation uses of wildlife in favor of preservationist, non-consumptive uses of wildlife.
- Fundamentally shift state policy away from multiple recreational use to a policy favoring a park-like, preservationist's view of only "watching" wildlife.

In addition to the policy change focus, the bill emphasizes indigenous species. OHA would like to point out that Oregon has chukars, gray partridge, and pheasants that were all introduced, and they make an excellent addition to Oregon! Also, turkey and valley quail (native to SW Oregon) and they might all be adversely affected by this bill.

Again, in our conversations with Rep. Helm about this bill we understand and support his efforts to broaden the base of those who pay to support Oregon's wildlife and habitat. However, current law governing wildlife policy, ORS 496.012 (1) already speaks to "all species of wildlife at optimum levels". It is all inclusive now. We don't see any benefit to changing the current policy.

Our board includes several professional wildlife biologists, currently working or retired, with well over 100 years of combined experience. They have carefully reviewed this bill along with our other board members, and concluded that the proposed changes are unnecessary and potentially damaging. Finally, we would suggest that the ODFW Commission be a part of any discussion that changes their agency's core policy foundation.

That concludes my testimony. I will be glad to answer any questions.