

**Testimony of Don Moore, Director
In Opposition to House Bill 3429
House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources
April 13, 2017**



Chair Clem and Members of the Committee:

As you may know, the Oregon Zoo is the state's #1 paid visitor attraction. We are proud of the experience we offer our visitors and of our efforts to provide a healthy and stimulating environment for the animals that have been entrusted to our care.

However, as important as it is for us to remain a top-notch visitor destination, this is not the actual mission of the Oregon Zoo. Rather, our mission is to create a better future for wildlife.

We pursue this mission in part through direct efforts to preserve and restore both populations and habitats of threatened and endangered native species like California condors¹, Oregon silverspot butterflies, Columbia Basin pygmy rabbits and western pond turtles. We support an education program on lead-free ammunition to engage hunters in voluntary efforts to improve conditions for predator survival. We also pursue our mission by joining with other accredited members of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), as well as other U.S. and international partners, in global efforts to improve conditions for the survival of species like elephants, orangutans, and sharks.

As a public agency, we do not take positions on ballot measures, but we strongly support the intent of Measure 100 (2016), which bans trafficking in wildlife and animal parts, focused on a list of particularly vulnerable species ranging from elephants to sharks and rays. So we are concerned that just a few months after nearly 70% of Oregon voters voted to protect these animals, a bill has been introduced that would roll back some of the key provisions of Measure 100. Specifically, HB 3429 would narrow the protection provided by Measure 100 in ways that would leave the vast majority of shark and ray species unprotected.

Sharks play a vital role in maintenance of ocean ecosystems around the world. Similarly, rays and skates play important roles in ocean health. Globally, shark and ray species are threatened with extinction largely due to overfishing (targeted and bycatch) and other unsustainable practices. With a slow growth rate, late age at maturity, and low rates of reproduction, sharks have a limited ability to recover from depletion due to unsustainable fishing practices and other threats. Trade in shark parts contributes significantly to the decline in shark abundance.

HB 3429 limits the protection of Measure 100 to species that appear on several specific lists of endangered species. However, the fact that a species does not appear on one of these lists (the listing process for which can be highly political and can take years) does not mean that a species does not currently face threats to its existence. All sharks are slow breeders and face significant threats to survival. For certain endangered species, it may also be necessary to prohibit trade in parts from similar species to facilitate enforcement and to effectively reduce the demand for parts that could cause the extinction of the endangered species or unnecessarily threaten the survival of

¹ Despite its name, the California condor once ranged from British Columbia to Baja California; Lewis and Clark's diaries noted the presence of huge vultures along the Columbia River. The US Fish and Wildlife Service plans to release condors in northern California close to the Oregon border in 2019. We anticipate that within a short period, condors will once again be flying in Oregon.

species that are not currently endangered. Of all endangered species, this concept is most applicable to sharks.

As noted above, the Oregon Zoo is an accredited member of the AZA, which has developed a focused and collaborative conservation program called "Saving Animals From Extinction" (SAFE). Sharks and rays are signature species of the SAFE program.

For all of these reasons, the Oregon Zoo opposes HB 3429 and urges you not to move it forward.