



**OREGON CHAPTER  
OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY**  
PO Box 2378  
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June 1, 2017

**FROM: The Oregon Chapter of The Wildlife Society**

**TO: House Committee on Rules**

**SUBJECT: Support for Proposed Amendments to HB 2213**

Chair Williamson and Members of Committee,

The Oregon Chapter of the Wildlife Society is writing to express our strong support for the amendments to HB 2213, proposed by Representative Helm. These amendments build an essential foundation to sustain Oregon's fish and wildlife heritage for future generations.

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 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 held in the public trust. Traditional funding for management of the public trust has relied almost solely on revenue generated by sportsmen and women, without substantial support from the general public. Moreover, sprawling residential development, burgeoning outdoor recreation, catastrophic wildfire, climate change, and other issues have only increased ODFW's workload beyond the capacity of declining traditional revenue sources.

As you may know, 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. The proposed amendments to HB 2213 are the first steps in realizing this vision by establishing the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund. 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 was developed by a partnership of several agencies, conservation groups and industry stakeholders, and represents a collaborative and proactive strategy for maintaining and restoring Oregon's fish, wildlife and their habitats. Implementation of the Oregon Conservation Strategy includes, but is not limited to the following priorities:

- Monitor and proactively conserve identified strategy species including state and federally listed species
- Maintain and restore identified strategy habitats and the wildlife they support
- Take action to address key conservation issues that affect Oregon's wildlife populations and habitats including climate change, land use changes, water quality and quantity, flooding and wildfire disruption, and invasive species
- Assess and manage the impacts of population growth and development on Oregon's wildlife and habitats
- Assess and manage growing outdoor recreation impacts to wildlife and habitats
- Expand recreational resources and programs for a broader spectrum of Oregon citizens, including non-harvest related activities
- Expand conservation education to inform, engage and cultivate a wider spectrum of Oregon's citizens supporting fish and wildlife conservation
- Continue to build and strengthen hunting and fishing opportunities and programs in Oregon

The proposed amendments to HB 2213 build the funding framework necessary to for ODFW to engage the modern conservation landscape, and as such, we urge the Committee to support these amendments. 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.

Regards,

ORTWS Board of Directors

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