
From: Elise W <ewolf97@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 6, 2018 9:00 PM
To: HAGNR Exhibits
Subject: HB 4015 Comments from E Wolf

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Elise Wolf
Sisters, OR

To: House Committee On Agriculture and Natural Resources

Re: HB 4015 - Relating to the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund

Dear Committee,

I am testifying in support of HB 4015. I want to thank the committee for hearing this critically important bill. Please show your support for the future of Oregon by passing this important bill.

1) Wildlife is one of Oregon's most valuable commodities and its economic importance in the state should not be underestimated.

A substantial percentage of the economy of Oregon revolves around nature and its wildlife – either as direct resource (fishing, natural resources), as tourism, as sport (hunting, birding), or indirectly from quality of life aspects that bring people and companies to Oregon in general. Oregon's reputation – its attraction across the spectrum, from individuals to large corporations – *is its natural beauty*, of which wildlife play a central role.

2) Oregonians' have high expectations of the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife. The public's expectations currently far exceed the agency's prescribed responsibilities. And yet the future of the agency will have to continue to expand simply to meet the conservation and management needs of wildlife given the state's increase in population and resource use. Wildlife impacts will escalate in the coming years, forcing the state to re-negotiate the role of ODFW. (notably, OD of "Fish & Wildlife", not "Large Charismatic Game & Some Fish").

3) Creating an avenue for increasing the revenue of ODFW should be considered a legislative priority. This over-worked agency continually loses funding and support in a time when the impacts and threats to our natural resources are growing exponentially.

As a wildlife rehabilitator I see on a nearly daily basis the impacts wildlife must endure. Starving seabirds – from lack of fish from warmer waters for example – washing up on our shores. Mule deer populations taking tumbling nose-dives from disease, poaching, and increased road fatalities. Warmer waters developing botulism and killing fish and birds in masse. Loss of habitat for most species from human incursion or environmental change. The list is exhaustive.

These issues will not be able to be ignored in the coming years. And the only agency with the qualifications, expertise, and a management role for handling them is ODFW. We need to reverse the fiscal strangulation of the agency, and work towards placing their critical work at the center, rather than the margins, of Oregon's vision of its future.

4. The bill offers a fiscally inconsequential impact in exchange for an avenue to expanded, creative forms of funding. Some may not be ready to change our tax laws to help ODFW, but this bill circumvents that need and allows for creative funding. While it starts with a minimal amount of initial funding from the state, the bill allows for new funding sources to be sought that could eventually make the fund independent of budget requests, while making the management of other wildlife related issues and needs, like

Oregon Conservation Strategy species' needs, possible. There is tremendous fiscal potential with this bill that would cost Oregonians nothing, yet benefit them incredibly.

In Sum

Wildlife needs are increasing exponentially. Soon, ODFW must begin to address wildlife impacts that involve species that do not have a funding source. Human impacts – whether from climate, population, or development – will continue to expand at scary rates in this state and nationally.

We must find new ways to fund the agency whose primary role is managing and conserving an aspect of what and who Oregonians are at their core. This bill is a painless way to take us towards that goal.

Keep Oregon wild.

Elise Wolf