A-Engrossed

House Bill 4015

Ordered by the House February 16
Including House Amendments dated February 16

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SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure.

Establishes Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund. Appropriates fund moneys to State Department of Fish and Wildlife for carrying out activities serving to protect, maintain or enhance fish and wildlife resources in Oregon. Establishes Oregon Conservation and Recreation Advisory Committee to review department policies regarding use of fund moneys and make recommendations regarding use of fund moneys for implementing and administering department activities. Provides for transferring specified amount of moneys from General Fund to Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund for biennium ending June 30, 2019.

Takes effect on 91st day following adjournment sine die.

A BILL FOR AN ACT

Relating to the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund; and prescribing an effective date.

Whereas today's challenges facing fish, wildlife and habitat are not being met by the current funding model for the State Department of Fish and Wildlife; and

Whereas the Task Force on Funding for Fish, Wildlife and Related Outdoor Recreation and Education was established by House Bill 2402 during the 2015 regular session of the Legislative Assembly (chapter 712, Oregon Laws 2015) and was tasked with developing recommendations for strengthening the department's ability to conserve natural resources, improve hunting and fishing opportunities and connect Oregonians to nature through outdoor recreation and education opportunities; and

Whereas the December 2016 task force report to the Legislative Assembly recommends potential alternative, sustainable funding sources for the department, potential budget adjustments to ensure relevant department program areas are funded in accordance with legislative direction and opportunities for the department to better achieve its mission through leveraging, coordinating and budgeting funds from alternate and existing sources; and

Whereas the task force recommendations are based on the importance of taking immediate action to address the increasing complexity and costs of conservation and management of fish, wildlife and habitat and on the importance of funding related recreational and educational opportunities; and

Whereas population growth, development, infrastructure needs, climate change and other natural and man-made changes all contribute to the increasing complexity and costs faced by the department by placing new pressures on Oregon's fish, wildlife and wild places; and

Whereas public attitudes, uses and demands related to recreation and the aesthetic value of the natural world have developed to reflect changing public needs and expectations concerning conser-
vation, recreation and education; and

Whereas society is becoming disconnected from the natural world and this disconnection im-

pacts public health and well-being, as well as the future of fish and wildlife in Oregon; and

Whereas investments are necessary to ensure that future generations can experience the natural
world, to increase public understanding of the numerous species of fish and wildlife that make
Oregon home, to improve hunting and fishing opportunities while reducing the hunting and fishing
license fees that currently fund most conservation efforts and to recognize diversity by providing
opportunities for all Oregonians to enjoy the state’s rich outdoor heritage; and

Whereas the increasing complexity and cost of conservation and management must be shared
by all Oregonians; and

Whereas addressing these challenges through implementation of the department’s statutory
mission and responsibilities requires new, diversified and sustainable sources of revenue to supple-
ment existing funding and to ensure that Oregon is a leader in fish and wildlife conservation and
management; and

Whereas establishing an Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund is a critical first step in
providing the department with a vehicle to receive and expend revenues dedicated to conservation,
management, research, habitat improvements, enforcement, outdoor recreation, education and other
activities that serve to protect, maintain or enhance the fish and wildlife resources of Oregon; now,
therefore,

Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:

SECTION 1. (1) The Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund is established separate
and distinct from the General Fund. Interest earned by the Oregon Conservation and Re-
creation Fund shall be credited to the fund.

(2) Moneys in the fund are continuously appropriated to the State Department of Fish
and Wildlife to carry out activities that serve to protect, maintain or enhance fish and
wildlife resources in Oregon. The activities for which the department may expend fund
moneys include, but are not limited to:

(a) Promoting the health of Oregon’s ecosystems and fish and wildlife species by imple-
menting conservation programs and strategies identified in the Oregon Conservation Strat-
egy, as defined in ORS 541.890, including conservation programs and strategies for the
nearshore identified in the marine component of the Oregon Conservation Strategy;

(b) Improving engagement of the public in hunting and fishing opportunities and in other
outdoor recreation opportunities related to and in support of healthy fish, wildlife and
habitats;

(c) Improving educational outreach and engagement of the public, including diverse and
underserved communities, related to and in support of healthy fish, wildlife and habitats;

(d) Engaging in, and providing funding for, joint projects of the department and the State
Parks and Recreation Department or other state agencies as recommended by the Oregon
Conservation and Recreation Advisory Committee established under section 2 of this 2018
Act; and

(e) Other conservation, management, research, habitat improvement, enforcement, out-
door recreation or education activities.

(3) The fund shall consist of:

(a) Moneys appropriated to the State Department of Fish and Wildlife for deposit in the
fund or otherwise transferred to the fund; and
(b) Gifts, grants, contributions or other donations for use as described in subsection (2) of this section, that are received by the department from any public or private source and caused to be deposited and credited to the fund.

SECTION 2. (1) The Oregon Conservation and Recreation Advisory Committee is established as an advisory committee to the State Fish and Wildlife Commission and the State Department of Fish and Wildlife for the purpose of carrying out the duties described in subsection (2) of this section. The commission shall determine the number of members of the committee and the geographical representation by the members. The Governor shall appoint the members of the committee.

(2) The committee shall review department policies regarding the use of Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund moneys and make recommendations to the commission and the department regarding the use of fund moneys for implementing and administering department activities.

(3) Members of the committee may not receive compensation for service as members. However, subject to any applicable law regulating travel and other expenses of state officers and employees, a member may be reimbursed for actual and necessary travel and other expenses incurred in the performance of official duties from moneys available to the department for the purpose of reimbursement of committee members.

(4) The department and the committee jointly shall submit a biennial report to the Legislative Assembly as provided in ORS 293.640 regarding the expenditure of moneys deposited in the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund established under section 1 of this 2018 Act and on the status of various activities funded by the moneys.

SECTION 3. In addition to and not in lieu of any other appropriation, there is appropriated to the State Department of Fish and Wildlife, for the biennium ending June 30, 2019, out of the General Fund, the amount of $40,000 for deposit in the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund established under section 1 of this 2018 Act.

SECTION 4. Notwithstanding any other law limiting expenditures, for the biennium ending June 30, 2019, expenditures by the State Department of Fish and Wildlife from the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund established under section 1 of this 2018 Act are not limited.

SECTION 5. This 2018 Act takes effect on the 91st day after the date on which the 2018 regular session of the Seventy-ninth Legislative Assembly adjourns sine die.