

March 6, 2019

Members of the House Natural Resource Committee
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Written testimony on HB 2841 (protecting sensitive wildlife location information)

Dear Chair Witt, Vice-Chair Gorsek, Vice-Chair Sprenger and Members of the House Natural Resource Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on House Bill 2841 that puts forward conditions and situations to protect sensitive wildlife location data. The undersigned groups represent thousands of Oregonians from all parts of the state and would like to request you to support HB 2841 as a preventative and precautionary measure to protect vulnerable individuals of wildlife species by protecting information related to their exact location, or the location of their sensitive life stages.

Poaching in Oregon is a growing problem and public access to sensitive location information of wildlife species makes them very vulnerable to poaching and other harm or harassment that have direct impact on their breeding, nurturing and hunting behaviors. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) maintains data pertaining to the exact location of individuals that have been radio-collared by the agency, as well as the location of sensitive habitat use such as breeding grounds, nesting or denning sites and spawning grounds. Such data is essential for the agency to make critical decisions related to the recovery and management of Oregon's wildlife. However, in doing so, the agency puts these individuals and their population at risk of being harmed or harassed. Currently, any member of the public can access such sensitive wildlife location data, including radio collar information and location of active dens, breeding or nesting sites. In case of species that reuse their breeding or nesting sites throughout their life, the current policy compromises their safety year after year and in case of species that tend to stay in groups or aggregate during certain life stages, identifying the location of one individual could compromise tens or hundreds of other individuals. Additionally, wildlife research and monitoring require a large investment of taxpayer dollars by ODFW. Therefore, failure to protect such data might not only mean failure of a research project or setting inaccurate management goals but also loss of radio collars and other such equipment is also a waste of taxpayer dollars.

This makes measures such as HB 2841 extremely important to protect Oregon's natural resources and save taxpayer dollars. The bill is a discrete measure to protect sensitive location data for fish and wildlife species monitored by ODFW for research and wildlife management purposes. It lays out the type of sensitive wildlife location data and the conditions under which ODFW will have the discretion to determine whether the release of such data (and the extent or scale of such data, if released) will put individuals of a species at risk of being located, harmed or harassed in any manner. The bill preserves access to information for governmental, educational, and Tribal entities as well as other ODFW management partners, landowners and stakeholders.

By supporting this bill, you will help further wildlife conservation and ethical hunting in the state while curbing the growing problem of poaching. We urge you to further conservation goals in Oregon through measures like this bill to ensure that wildlife can survive and thrive in Oregon for present and future generations of Oregonians.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely

Bob Sallinger
Director of Conservation
**Audubon Society of
Portland**

Paige Spence
**Oregon League of
Conservation Voters**

Rhett Lawrence
Conservation Director
**Oregon Chapter, Sierra
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Brian Kelly
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