



HUMANE VOTERS | OREGON

Testimony of Humane Voters Oregon on HB 2829
House Committee on Natural Resources

March 13, 2019

Chair Witt and Members of the Committee:

Humane Voters Oregon (previously known as Humane Oregon) is a nonprofit organization working in Oregon's political process and elections to promote humane treatment of animals. We have board members from several different animal welfare organizations but are not affiliated with any other state or national organization.

Humane Voters Oregon supports House Bill 2829, which would create a Conservation and Recreation Fund, with an initial appropriation of \$17 million, to help fund the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. We support the bill because it would help diversify the Department's funding among more beneficiaries of its work and, we hope, result in greater emphasis on wildlife management for all Oregonians.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife is charged with managing all fish and wildlife in the state as a trustee for all people of the state.¹ However, the Department's funding has long depended heavily on the sale of hunting and fishing licenses.² This means at least two things: (1) that hunters and anglers pay disproportionately for fish and wildlife management; and (2) that the Department could (and in our view does) see its constituency as primarily hunters and anglers, even though they constitute a small portion of the total population.³

HB 2829 would help address both these issues. It would take financial pressure off hunters and anglers and would further encourage the Department to serve a broader constituency.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Brian Posewitz

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Board Member/Administrator

¹ See ORS 496.012 ("wildlife shall be managed to prevent serious depletion of any indigenous species and to provide the optimum recreational and aesthetic benefits for present and future generations of the citizens of this state"; "coequal goals of wildlife management" include "maintain all species of wildlife at optimum levels" and "make decisions that allow for the best social, economic and recreational utilization of wildlife resources by all user groups"); ORS 496.004(19) (definition of "[w]ildlife" includes broad range of species); ORS 498.002 (wildlife is property of the state); *Simpson v. Dept. Of Fish and Wildlife*, 242 Or. App. 287 (2011) (state manages the wildlife in trust for all citizens).

² License fees (dedicated and general) accounted for about 30 percent of total revenue (including federal revenue) in the 2015-17 biennium. However, that was the largest percentage share after federal funds. 2019-2021 ODFW Budget Briefing Paper, p. 17.

³ Since 1975, the number of people who hunt and fish in Oregon has steadily declined on both an absolute and per capita basis. Currently, about eight percent of Oregonians hunt and about 17 percent fish. 2019-2021 ODFW Budget Briefing Paper, p. 23.