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March 11, 2021

House Committee On Agriculture and Natural Resources
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Testimony: HB 2600

Chair Witt, Vice Chairs Breese-Iverson and Hudson, and members of the committee,

Central Oregon LandWatch (“LandWatch”) is a conservation organization which for more than 35 years has protected Central Oregon’s beautiful forests and high desert, rivers and springs, fish and wildlife, and our vibrant communities. We work to conserve the region’s ecosystems, wildlife habitat, and working rural lands balanced with a responsible, sustainable approach to planning and fostering thriving communities.

LandWatch supports HB 2600. Bill proposes to transfer certain funds received as transient lodging tax to the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund.

HB 2600 would provide for moneys received from the state transient lodging tax at a rate in excess of 1.475 percent to be transferred to the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund. We here in Central Oregon, a statewide hub for tourism as well as the center of some of the state’s most beautiful natural amenities believe this bill is marked by sound reasoning, fiscal responsibility, and appropriate stewardship of natural resources. We further believe that most individuals assessed these standing taxes would support the transfer of a reasonable proportion of the revenue to support the protection of the very natural amenities that many of them are likely traveling to our region to enjoy. Tourism should not just exploit Oregon’s amazing lands, waters, and wildlife, but should also help mitigate its own impacts.

LandWatch thanks the committee for its consideration of this important bill and is especially grateful to its forward-thinking sponsors, copied herewith.

Respectfully submitted,
Nathan Hovekamp, PhD
Wildlife Program Director
Central Oregon LandWatch

cc: Representatives Helm, Lively, Neron, Power, and Wilde, and Senators Dembrow, Frederick, and Prozanski

