



## ASSOCIATION OF NORTHWEST STEELHEADERS

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March 12, 2021

RE: Steelheaders Testimony on House Bill 2600

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Dear Chair Witt and House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee members:

My name is Betsy Emery. I am the Advocacy and Campaign Manager for the Association of Northwest Steelheaders. Our organization was founded in 1960 and is one of the oldest recreational fishing and conservation non-profit organizations in the Pacific Northwest. We have eight chapters in Oregon and one in Southwest Washington, representing over 800 members and nearly 5,000 supporters dedicated to enhancing and protecting fisheries and fish habitats for today and tomorrow, with a vision of abundant, sustainable fisheries and healthy watersheds.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House bill 2600. This bill would provide a percentage of the transient lodging tax to support the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund (ORCF). The ORCF was established by legislation in 2019 ([HB 2829](#)) as a dedicated fund, separate from the General Fund, to protect, maintain and enhance fish and wildlife habitats, hunting and fishing opportunities, and recreation facilities throughout the State. Currently, the ORCF is funded by personal donations and fundraising efforts with potential match from the Oregon General Fund.

Currently, the funding generated by the [transient lodging tax](#) is predominantly transferred to the Oregon Tourism Commission to promote state-wide tourism. State tourism campaigns are often focused on amplifying our states' outdoor recreation opportunities and scenic landscapes as a means of driving tourism from in-state and out-of-state residents.

Outdoor recreation is a major component of Oregon's local and state-wide economy. According to the [Oregon Outdoor Recreation Economic Impact Study](#), outdoor recreation supported more than 224,000 full- and part-time jobs statewide and supported \$15.6 billion in spending in 2019. [The report estimates](#) that fishing related recreation generated almost \$430 million in spending; hunting generated \$161 million; and wildlife and nature viewing generated almost \$1 billion per

year. Clearly, the types of outdoor activities that the OCRF maintains and enhances are significant components of Oregon's overall outdoor recreation economy.

Further, this report makes it clear that outdoor recreation and our scenic landscapes are one of the primary drivers of in-state and out-of-state tourism in our state. Dedicating funding from the transient lodging tax to sustain the OCRF, in addition to supporting our state-wide tourism promotion, would ensure that the State continues to improve and enhance the facilities and landscapes that sustain this significant source of tourism and economic activity throughout our State.

We recommend that the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee support this bill and refer it to the Revenue Committee for consideration.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to testify on behalf of this important bill.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Betsy Emery". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped "E" at the end.

Betsy Emery  
Advocacy and Campaign Manager  
Association of Northwest Steelheaders  
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