



Oregon

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**To: The Honorable Brad Witt, Chair
House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources**



House Bill 2068

**Dr. Doug Cottam, Wildlife Division Administrator
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife**

The Department appreciates the opportunity to discuss House Bill 2068 with you today. House Bill 2068 removes the sunset from the Landowner Preference Program.

The Landowner Preference (LOP) Program was first adopted in 1981 and implemented in 1982 and provided a means for landowners with a qualifying amount of property to be able to acquire controlled hunt tags for buck deer and bull elk. Controlled hunts limit the number of hunting tags available for the public to draw thus creating the possibility that landowners, who are providing habitat for these animals, may not be able to hunt on their own property. The LOP program was developed to address that problem.

Depending on the amount of acreage, LOP tags range from a minimum of two tags up to 14 tags for controlled elk and deer hunts including hunts with a bag limit of: either sex, buck deer or bull elk, or doe deer or cow elk. Landowner preference tags for the hunting of pronghorn antelope are only available for controlled hunts with either sex or doe bag limits, not for buck pronghorn antelope hunts. Landowner preference tags may only be used on the landowner's property. A landowner can transfer LOP tags for antlerless deer or elk to anyone of his/her choosing. If a landowner is eligible for two or more tags for antlered deer or elk, the landowner may transfer up to 50 percent of those tags to anyone of their choosing.

The current LOP program also provides a means for landowners experiencing damage from deer to use their LOP tags to address that damage. Each LOP deer tag may be used to take two antlerless deer prior to, during or after the hunting season dates of that tag. The Oregon Landowner Damage Program (ORS 496.158) is a separate program for landowners to address damage that is "presently occurring" from elk.

For the past 38 years, the LOP program has been successful in implementing a fair means of providing landowners an opportunity to hunt deer, elk or antelope on their property in areas where the hunting opportunity for these public resources are limited in nature. The Department is requesting this program be made permanent. With the Sunset Date for this well-established program removed, the LOP Program would be reviewed by the Legislative Assembly in the future on an as needed basis.

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