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House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water  
Oregon Legislature  
Salem, Oregon

Re: HB 2527, ODFW wildlife habitat tax deferral program

I am writing to urge your support for HB 2527, which will support wildlife habitat conservation on private lands in the north Willamette Valley. Tax deferrals provide encouragement for private landowners to support wildlife and valuable habitat, which otherwise can cost them property value and taxes. Incentives like tax deferrals are important to help people that care for wildlife to manage their lands consistent with their values.

A coalition of eight soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs) stands ready to assist the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) in implementing HB 2527. The SWCDs can provide grants and cost shares for habitat improvements on private land, but it is the tax deferrals that can be critical to support landowners in ongoing maintenance. Money not spent on taxes can be spent on habitat management, which is rarely funded by grants.

Please advance this bill out of committee to the full legislature, with input and edits from the SWCDs.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Elaine M. Stewart*

Retired ecologist and habitat restoration project manager