



600 NE Grand Ave.  
Portland, OR 97232-2736  
oregonmetro.gov

January 23, 2023

House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water  
900 Court Street  
Salem, Oregon 97301

**RE: Support for HB 2527: ODFW Wildlife Tax Deferral**

Chair Helm, Vice-Chairs Hartman and Owens, Members of the Committee,

Metro's Parks and Nature Program offers its strongest possible support for HB 2527, which would offer tax-deferral to landowners managing their land for fish and wildlife benefits under an Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) approved Wildlife Habitat Management and Conservation Plan (WHCMP). This measure would send the right signal to landowners, that Oregon considers land management for wildlife habitat every bit as important to our state as managing for timber.

Thanks to three voter supported bonds and property tax levies, Metro manages an 18,000-acre portfolio of natural areas, nature parks and developed recreation areas for our region. The latest bond and levies were approved with approximately 70% voting yes. This is a clear message that our region and its 2.5 million voters strongly support protecting our state's natural heritage for the future.

Land protection alone will not sustain our ecosystem and the many benefits it provides in the face of continued growth and climate change without strategic action on private land. HB 2527 would allow private landowners to continue receiving tax-deferred status for land they manage for wildlife habitat under a plan approved by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. Such plans assure good use of taxpayer funding and more importantly, a future that includes the plants, animals and clean water Oregonians have enjoyed *without new regulations*.

Without HB 2527, landowners who believe in the Oregon Conservation Strategy are essentially being told – "go it alone." Organizations and people who believe in habitat protection will be pushed towards seeking regulations. There is demand for these programs from landowners, and there are positive social, economic, and ecologic outcomes that can be gained from WHCMP.

Finally, HB 2527 is supported by a broad coalition of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, conservation organization, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and small landowners across the North Willamette Valley.

We urge your support on HB 2527.

Sincerely,

Dan Moeller  
Conservation Program Director, Metro Parks and Nature

