



## Volunteer

Testimony Before Oregon House Committee on Rules

February 2, 2023

**Subject: HJR 5-1 - Proposed amendment to Oregon Constitution to declare constitutional right to fish, hunt or harvest wildlife or gather wild foods**

Chair Fahey, Vice Chairs Breeze-Iverson and Kropf

My name is David Wiley. I live in Sublimity, Oregon. I am a member of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) and a Lead Volunteer for the Elk Foundation in Oregon. Today I am speaking to you on behalf of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

The RMEF is a national non-profit hunter sponsored conservation organization whose mission is to ensure the future of elk, other wildlife, their habitat, and our hunting heritage. We represent more than 225,000 members nationwide and more than 14,000 in Oregon. Since 1991 within Oregon, RMEF and its partners have completed more than 1,034 conservation and hunting heritage projects in the state, enhancing over 865,647 acres and improved recreational access to 139,655 acres.

**RMEF strongly recommends HJR 5-1 for this Committee's full and unqualified support, approval, and passage to the full House with a do-pass recommendation.**

Hunting, fishing, and the gathering of wild food is man's pre-modern condition, and the tradition of seeking and collecting wild food is a tradition that Oregonians value. I submit that none of us would be here today were it not for ancestors that hunted, fished, and gather their substance from the land.

Modern scientifically regulated hunting provides sustainable wildlife populations and funds most wildlife management. Today across the USA we have elk, bison, white-tailed deer, and wild turkeys to name a few species recovered because of hunter sponsored regulation and management funded by hunters. In Oregon elk, Bighorn Sheep, Rocky Mountain Goats, Cougar and Gray Wolves were restored to thriving populations by science based hunter supported wildlife management.

Hunters protect wild places too. The recent addition of 6,000 acres to the Minam Area is a project championed and facilitated by RMEF, a hunting organization, and is funded in large part by hunter's license and tag fees and the excise taxes hunters and shooters pay on firearms and ammunition. A few years back RMEF facilitated the purchase and transfer to the US Forest Service of the 14,000-acre Headwater of the John Day River Project which hunters largely funded.



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Providing constitutional protection for hunting or harvesting of wildlife is needed because radical interests are actively trying to make hunting illegal.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Are there any questions?