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Dear Members of the Ways and Means Committee on Natural Resources,

I write to you today as a member of the public who strongly supports the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Wildlife Coexistence Funding Package and would like to see it included in the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's annual budget. As an Oregonian concerned with the conservation of native wildlife, I understand the vital role of Oregon wildlife rehabilitation centers in assisting the public with wildlife-related issues as well as providing medical and recuperative care for injured or orphaned native wildlife.

As Oregon becomes a more populous state with citizens living or recreating in previously wild or uninhabited spaces, the potential for wildlife-related conflict only increases. The Wildlife Coexistence Funding Package not only provides resources for minimizing and mitigating this conflict but also provides important funding for wildlife rehabilitation centers tasked with assisting native wildlife when members of the public find animals in need. Wildlife rehabilitation centers in Oregon provide an important set of public services and have historically done so without significant financial support from state or local government. The Wildlife Coexistence Funding Package provides the opportunity for the state of Oregon to offer wildlife rehabilitation centers financial backing that will allow them to better serve both Oregonians and Oregon native wildlife.

In our current era of environmental challenge and ever-increasing contact between humans and native wildlife, wildlife rehabilitation, conflict resolution, and conservation are more important than ever before. Please support the vital efforts of state wildlife rehabilitation and wildlife education organizations as they continue to undertake the work that allows Oregonians and native wildlife to live alongside one another in the beautiful state we call home.

Sincerely,

Melisa Colvin