



OREGON HUNTERS ASSOCIATION

Protecting Oregon's Wildlife, Habitat and Hunting Heritage

P.O. Box 1706, Medford, OR 97501 • (541) 772-7313

oha@oregonhunters.org • oregonhunters.org

March 22, 2023

Joint Committee on Ways and Means - Subcommittee on Natural Resources
RE: SB 5509 - Department of Fish & Wildlife

Co-Chairs Dembrow and Pham, Members of the Committee,

The Oregon Hunters Association (OHA) is Oregon's largest state-centric hunter conservation organization, representing 10,000 sportsmen and women throughout 26 chapters in the state. Our mission statement is 'to protect Oregon's wildlife, habitat, and hunting heritage' and we have a strong history of advocating for science-based wildlife management.

As such, our organization works directly with the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW) on items such as policy issues, wildlife management topics, hunter education, and the national R3 movement of recruitment, retention, and reactivation of hunters. OHA values the work of ODFW and the ability to engage with the agency on multiple levels.

OHA is generally supportive of the Governor's Recommended Budget (GRB), in particular the following items which have been included:

POP 120 - The OCS Farm Bill Biologists. These positions are primarily funded with federal dollars and provide additional capacity to the department.

POP 121 - The Minam River Wildlife Area Acquisition. OHA is extremely supportive of the Minam acquisition coordinated by Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Manulife Investment Management, and Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife to conserve over 15,000 acres in northeast Oregon.

POP 122 - Mule Deer Coordinator. OHA supports the prioritization of mule deer research and monitoring, as well as the completion and implementation of the Mule Deer Management Plan. This position is a great value for the state with federal funds making up the majority of the cost.

POP 123 - Coquille Valley Wildlife Area Biologist. This position is another great match for federal dollars that brings great value to the state and focuses on habitat restoration.

In addition to these items, OHA recommends the inclusion of the following items that were not included in the GRB:

POP 102 - Habitat Division Policy & Operations. OHA supported the inclusion of funding in the 2021-23 Legislatively Adopted Budget to reinstitute the Habitat Division within ODFW. We feel strongly that POP 102 should be included in the agency budget to make the division whole

and fully operational. The Habitat Division is already been tasked with many large-scale projects and is responsible for implementation of several plans that are at the forefront of habitat and wildlife concerns. OHA urges the committee to include the policy and operations funding in the 2023-35 Legislatively Adopted Budget to ensure the division is successful in handling the large workload it is receiving.

POP 108 - GNA Coordinators. The Good Neighbor Authority positions are a great value for the state with a two-to-one match of Federal funds to General fund match dollars. These positions are imperative to ODFW's ability to coordinate and implement projects on federal lands that have a direct impact on Oregon's wildlife species.

POP 115 - Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Funding. OHA strongly supports the agency's efforts to include funding for additional personnel to increase CWD sample collection, testing capabilities, and increase research. CWD presents a dire threat to Oregon's ungulate populations. A prion disease, CWD is 100% fatal in deer, elk, and moose. The disease has been confirmed in multiple cases in Idaho, within 25 miles of the Oregon border. OHA, in conjunction with a coalition of sportsmen's organizations, authored HB 2532 in an attempt to ensure CWD funding would approved; as such, it is imperative that the Joint Ways & Means Committee pass HB 2532 to ensure the funding is secured for the incredibly important work of testing and researching CWD.

Wildlife Services Predator Control Fund. USDA-Wildlife Services provides vital services to Oregonians, both rural and urban, in the control of predatory animals damaging agricultural crops, as well as incidents of wildlife-human conflict. The \$407,532 removed from the GRB assists in partially funding USDA-Wildlife Services. OHA urges the committee to restore the funding to USDA-Wildlife Services.

Thank you,

Amy Patrick
Policy Director