



OREGON HUNTERS ASSOCIATION

Protecting Oregon's Wildlife, Habitat and Hunting Heritage

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RE: HB 4148

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

The Oregon Hunters Association (OHA) is Oregon's largest state-centric hunter conservation organization, representing over 11,000 sportsmen and women throughout 26 chapters in the state. Our mission is 'to protect Oregon's wildlife, habitat, and hunting heritage' and we strongly support science-based wildlife and habitat management.

OHA strongly supports HB 4148 in its entirety.

Wildlife Disease Programs

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is an immense threat for Oregon's deer, elk, and moose populations. The 100% fatal, highly contagious, prion disease has been detected in Idaho since 2021 with approximately 50 positive cases in the last two years.

With CWD on Oregon's doorstep, it is imperative that funding is prioritized to position Oregon in a more proactive capacity for the eventuality of a positive case within the state. The increased capacity at Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW) will provide an additional full time position in the wildlife laboratory and additional seasonal positions to assist with increased sample collection efforts.

In addition to the increased capacity at ODFW, funds would be provided the Oregon Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (OVDL) at Oregon State University to establish a testing facility for the CWD samples within Oregon. Currently, the samples are sent to Colorado State University (CSU) however the length of time to receive results has increased exponentially due to the work load of CSU's lab.

In addition to the CWD-specific funding, the OVDL would also receive funds to upgrade and expand its facilities; a much needed investment in a laboratory that has handled a vast amount of testing, from Covid-19 to highly pathogenic avian influenza.

Invasive Species Council

The funding for the Invasive Species Council is necessary for the continued efforts to mitigate the negative impacts from invasive species. The funding in HB 4148 would assist the Council in establishing a high degree of public awareness regarding invasive species, as well as emergency responses to control or eradicate infestations.

Wildlife Coexistence

As Oregon's urban centers continue to grow, so do areas of conflict between wildlife and humans. Reducing these conflicts, in accordance to the wildlife policy in ORS 496.012, benefits both Oregonians and our wildlife. Adding personnel capacity specific to the reduction of human-wildlife conflict will allow ODFW's existing staff, such as District Biologists, to return their focus to their primary job duties.

Wildlife Corridors

OHA has invested countless hours of staff and volunteer time in an effort to support and expand the work around wildlife migration corridors. The language in HB 4148 builds upon previous legislative policy and funding to provide guidance and mechanisms for incorporating wildlife corridor features in future planning for Oregon's roadways.

OHA supports HB 4148 and its focus on these important, yet chronically underfunded, programs and agencies with a holistic approach toward wildlife health and public education.

Thank you for your time,
Amy Patrick
Policy Director