



Chair Lively, Vice Chairs Gamba and Levy, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Pauline Hice, and I am writing on behalf of the Oregon Wildlife Rehabilitation Association (OWRA), an Oregon-based nonprofit dedicated to supporting rehabilitation and conservation efforts of native Oregon wildlife. We were pleased to have three of our association members, Bird Alliance of Oregon, Chintimini Wildlife Center, and the Wildlife Center of North Coast, included in the workgroup that created the framework for the Wildlife Stewardship/Coexistence Program.

Our mission as an association is to serve as a platform that connects Oregon's 15 licensed wildlife rehabilitation facilities and individual rehabilitators, fostering collaboration and the exchange of knowledge to ensure native wildlife receive the highest standard of care in coordination with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. The educational, wildlife care, and conservation services rehabilitators provide to Oregon citizens are critical. Rehabilitators are the first point of contact for members of the public that have encountered injured or orphaned wildlife or have questions or concerns about wildlife. Whether it's a migrating songbird that has hit a window, a squirrel getting struck by a car, a hawk preying on backyard chickens, a family of raccoons living under a deck, or a bear raiding garbage bins, we provide guidance and solutions to prevent or resolve conflicts in ways that are safe for both people and wildlife as well as provide critical care for wildlife in need. Cumulatively, Oregon rehabilitation facilities receive over 30,000 calls annually from the public regarding wildlife. These hotline calls would otherwise go to ODFW, ODOT or OSP. Wildlife rehabilitators' work saves the state a significant amount of money every year. However, rehabilitators receive no financial support from the state for our operations and rely entirely on private donations and grants. The programs that are offered by wildlife rehabilitation facilities provide most of the programs proposed in this bill already without any financial support from the state. Without the contributions of wildlife rehabilitation facilities across the state, wildlife would face significant challenges. This bill would provide much-needed funding to support this work.

Wildlife rehabilitation has been proven to be a viable conservation tool. A recent study by Dr. Christian Hagen at Oregon State University found that out of 20 different species of raptors studied, a total sample size of 69,700 patients, 18 species saw measurable numbers of individuals added to the population due to successful rehabilitation and release by rehabilitation centers. (Hagen et. al., 2024). Rehabilitators also serve as a resource for emergent wildlife diseases in Oregon through the data that is collected either from hotline calls or from patients admitted to their facilities.

By supporting HB 2980, the Oregon Legislature has the opportunity to invest in the people and organizations working to balance the needs of wildlife and communities. This bill will strengthen resources for rehabbers and provide state support both in personnel and funding opportunities. We urge you to pass HB 2980 to show that you value wildlife rehabilitation in Oregon and wish to support their crucial role in wildlife conservation.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony.

Oregon Wildlife Rehabilitation Association
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Members of the Board:

Sarah Spangler, President
Pauline Hice, Vice President
Claire Peterson, DVM, Wildlife Veterinarian and OWRA Secretary
Naoko Aketa, Member
Ginger Nealon, Member