

February 4, 2025

Subject: Support for HB 2980 - Wildlife Stewardship Program

Dear House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB 2980, the Wildlife Stewardship Program. This critical initiative will enhance Oregon's ability to address human-wildlife conflicts through proactive, science-based solutions while promoting responsible coexistence with our state's diverse wildlife.

As climate change, habitat destruction, and human expansion push people and wildlife into closer proximity, conflicts are increasing in both urban and rural communities. These encounters often result in costly reactive measures that fail to address the root causes of these conflicts and erode public support for conservation. HB 2980 offers a forward-thinking solution that prioritizes long-term stewardship over short-term, lethal responses.

The Wildlife Stewardship Program represents a crucial shift from reactive to proactive wildlife management, fostering a culture of conservation and coexistence. It will provide consistent, standardized approaches to human-wildlife interactions while maximizing the capacity of existing resources. This initiative is endorsed by a strong coalition, including the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Oregon Wildlife Coalition, and other conservation organizations.

At a time when extractive policies threaten Oregon's natural heritage, passing HB 2980 is a meaningful step toward ensuring our state remains a leader in wildlife stewardship and responsible environmental management. I urge you to support this bill and advocate for its passage in the current legislative session.

Sincerely,

Samantha Georgi

Bend, OR