



Metro Council President Tom Hughes

February 13, 2018

Rep. Brian Clem, Chair
House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Support for House Bill 4015

Dear Rep. Clem and Members of the Committee:

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) contends with an enormous responsibility to manage fish and wildlife and their habitats across private, state, and federal ownership boundaries. This duty includes the stewardship of both game and non-game wildlife populations held in the public trust, while relying almost solely on increasingly precarious revenue from hunters and fishers. Residential development, burgeoning outdoor recreation, catastrophic wildfire, climate change, and other issues have increased the pressure on non-game wildlife across the state and added to the urgency, scope and cost of managing it.

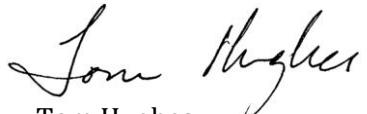
ODFW has a plan for monitoring, assessing and managing non-game wildlife in the form of the [Oregon Conservation Strategy](#). This strategy was developed by a partnership of several agencies, conservation groups and industry stakeholders, and represents a collaborative and proactive strategy for maintaining and restoring Oregon's fish, wildlife and their habitats. However, funds for fully implementing the strategy are not currently available.

To meet this challenge, the 2015 Legislature passed House Bill 2402 to create a Task Force on Funding for Fish, Wildlife and Related Outdoor Recreation and Education. The charge of the Task Force was to address this issue and develop funding proposals to produce a sustainable, broad-based revenue source to meet ODFW's current and future conservation challenges. Among the Task Force's recommendations was the creation of an Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund dedicated to the conservation and management of Oregon's native fish and wildlife.

House Bill 4015 would create the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund and provide it with \$13 million from the General Fund, which could potentially enable Oregon to seek a federal match greater than that amount. These funds would enable ODFW to support its existing programs and obligations and also to implement the Oregon Conservation Strategy. Even if these federal match dollars are not available this session, the creation of the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund with enough funding to lay the groundwork for future allocations would constitute an important first step toward realizing the vision of the Oregon Conservation Strategy.

For these reasons, and to advance the Oregon Zoo's mission of creating a better future for wildlife, we urge you to support HB 4015.

Sincerely,



Tom Hughes
Metro Council President



Don Moore, Ph.D.
Director, Oregon Zoo