Addressing Wildlife Disease

The Oregon and Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (OVDL) plays a vital role in public health, responding to issues of serious concern for people and wildlife, including highly contagious bacterial disease, avian flu, and mosquito born illnesses. Yet, the OVDL remains in need of resources. Consistent with recommendations from the legislative report directed by HB 4128 (2022), HB 4148 allocates $3.5 million for critical equipment and capacity necessary for the OVDL and the state Wildlife Health Lab to combat threats such as Chronic Wasting Disease and zoonotic diseases.

Responding to Invasive Species

Invasive species are associated with an estimated $200 billion in losses and control costs nationally each year (adjusted to 2024 dollars). In Oregon, invasive sudden oak death could detriment our forest and nursery sectors as much as $600 million per year, and issues continue to arise such as European green crabs impacting northwest fisheries and highly damaging quagga mussels recently identified in Oregon. Similar to wildfire response, addressing invasive species is a race against the clock. HB 4148 would allocate $1.5 million for the Oregon Invasive Species Council to evaluate and address vulnerabilities, increase public awareness, and respond to emergencies.

Promoting Wildlife Stewardship and Coexistence

With population growth and other pressures, greater public education is needed on living alongside wildlife, as well as a need to advance humane solutions when conflicts arise. Originally proposed in ODFW POP 113 (2023, pp. 786-789), HB 4148 would establish a program at the state Department of Fish and Wildlife, including biologists to support informed stewardship across the state, investments in public education, and grants to rehabilitation centers that care for injured animals.

Ensuring Safe Passage for People and Wildlife

Efforts to reduce the numerous vehicle crashes involving Oregon wildlife have proven both highly popular and extremely effective. HB 4148 will further improve outcomes by bolstering technical guidance available to planners and engineers integrating wildlife crossing features in highway projects. The bill would also update relevant agency reports to ensure we have the information we need on projects, timelines, and funding.

JOIN THE COALITION IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 4148

CONTACT: Greg Mintz, Chief of Staff | Office of Representative Helm | Rep.KenHelm@OregonLegislature.gov