

8:00 a.m., June 8, 2011 Testimony before the House Revenue Committee

My name is Meg Ruby. I am here as a busy mom of two school age boys in support of the Wild Bird Conservation Act (HR 3374).

Like thousands of other Oregonians, I buy birdseed and suet for birds that feed in my yard, because my family enjoys watching birds.

25% of Oregon's wild bird populations are declining. This includes the Western Meadowlark -- Oregon's state bird, and one of my personal favorites. As a mom and an environmental educator, it is very scary and sad for me to know when our children grow up, many of the wild songbirds we know and love could well go extinct.

My family travels the state to be in nature and to view wildlife. We contribute to local economies, but unlike anglers or hunters, we pay no fees to support the management and conservation of the species we enjoy. At five cents for every pound of birdseed sold, the HR 3374 will generate \$2 to \$4 million every two years. With these funds, Oregon will be better able to help conserve wild birds.

My husband and I are always looking for ways to make ends meet. But I know we, and our friends, will gladly 'pay a nickel for the birds'.

Henry Wasdworth Longfellow wrote:

"Tis always morning somewhere, and... Somewhere the birds are singing evermore."

Don't we prefer the above to the future described by Dr Suess in "The Lorax"?:

"At the far end of town where the Grickle-grass grows... and no birds ever sing excepting old crows..."

Oregon's wild birds are our natural heritage to conserve or squander. This committee and this legislature can help save the Western Meadowlark and other wild birds. Passing the Wild Bird Conservation Act out of your committee is the most important first step to that victory.

Thank you.

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