

Chair Nathanson and members of the House Committee on Revenue,

My name is Donna Acord and I live in Portland, Oregon. I am submitting this testimony in strong support of HB 4134 with the -1 amendment to increase the state lodging tax by 1.25% and help recover Oregon's most vulnerable fish, wildlife, and habitats.

I was born in Oregon and have lived here nearly all of my life. I was born at the naval base on Tongue Point in Astoria and spent my growing up years in Roseburg, Myrtle Creek and Veneta, OR, going to college at UO as first in my family. Living in the beauty of Oregon all these years, I have always appreciated the many benefits which I took for granted growing up - being able to hunt, fish, hike, ride trails with my horse, backpack, climb its many mountains, and find solace in the quiet of forests and meadows. As an adult I have had the satisfaction of introducing children to the wonders of our wild areas through volunteer work and as an auntie to my many nieces, nephews, their children, and their friends.

I have also introduced many adults to our beautiful landscapes, and the amazing creatures who live within. I am frequently asked what they can do to help preserve it, when I share the conservation work I have been involved in. Since retiring, I have volunteered with The Nature Conservancy at Tom McCall Point in the Gorge, and in West Linn at Camassia; with Friends of the Columbia River Gorge with Outdoor School and adult educational hikes; with Oregon Zoo's Cascades PikaWatch; and have worked conducting bird surveys for Bird Alliance of Oregon on Sauvie Island, at Cook Park in Tigard, at PCC Rock Creek, and on the Oregon Coast at various locations.

In my conversations with friends who volunteer as I do, as well as with others I meet who ask how they can help, we have discussed the failed attempt some years back to impose a tax on purchases at outdoor sporting goods stores. I know that was defeated then by strong lobbies from store owners, but it seems we are at a different point now. A lot more people have come to Oregon, and a lot more have discovered, especially during the pandemic, the wonders of the

outdoors in Oregon, and do not want to lose it by not taking care to preserve it.

Securing long term dedicated funding for wildlife and their habitats would not only help protect and preserve wildlife and habitats, but also support local communities and businesses that rely on tourism dollars. The tourism industry in Oregon supports nearly 200,000 jobs and produces \$16 billion in consumer spending. To invest now would continue to provide more economic opportunities for our communities over time.

To have a robust tourism industry we need healthy and thriving numbers of fish, wildlife and the health of habitats they depend on for survival. We know now we can no longer rely on the federal government to help us in this endeavor as they cut funds and abolish policies which protect our fish, wildlife and habitats. We have a chance as the State of Oregon to stand out and inspire other states as an example of how to protect our natural heritage.

Please support "1.25% for Wildlife" by passing HB 4134 today.

Thank you for listening to me.

Donna J. Acord