

Submitter: Hannah Buschert
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4134

Thank you for considering my comments on this matter. I am writing in opposition to House Bill 4134.

Although I currently work in the hospitality industry as a third-generation hotelier, I also hold an advanced degree in Natural Resource Management and have a career history working in state wildlife agencies. So, I do have sympathy for the financial struggles that the agency is facing and understand the importance of funding this important work. However, this is not the right way to go about it. Taxing the hospitality industry is brought up again and again for any financial shortfalls in this state and that is not right. I believe that funding should come from those who benefit from the resource and when it comes to our state's fish, wildlife, and habitat – that's all of us. Throughout our country's history, fish and wildlife conservation was supported and funded by those who used it. These were typically fishers and hunters, however these resource consumptive sports have declined in participation and so agencies have had to seek alternative funding sources. How that lead to hospitality? I have no idea.

Please stop this continual over taxation of the hospitality industry. I am not going to make the argument about "high taxes will not make us competitive in the tourism landscape", because that has been said. But instead, I will implore you to be creative and appeal to the people of our state. If they want to protect and conserve our natural resources, I believe in our citizens and that they will do the right thing. It is up to our elected officials to advocate on behalf of our state and its people. Instead this bill targets my customers who will pay the price that we all benefit from.

In Cannon Beach, our lodging customers are taxed at 14% which has been increased by 3% in the past two years to fund the building and staffing of a county jail and the building of a city hall and police station. These types of taxes, including HB4134, are inappropriate uses of a taxing authority who instead should be taxing those who use and benefit from the services and projects that are being funded by said tax.

Thank you for your consideration,

Hannah Buschert
Sixth-generation Oregonian, Small Business Hotelier, and Wildlife Educator