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On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4134

I have lived on the Oregon Coast and at the West end of the Columbia Gorge since 1980. I have witnessed a drastic, alarming change in our landscape, waterways, climate, and wildlife. Mature and old growth forests have all but disappeared, and common birds, fish, amphibians and invertebrates have now become scarce. The climate at the coast used to be cool and humid, nearly year-round. Now it is much hotter and drier, sometimes even in winter. My home, which used to be in a stunningly beautiful place, is now surrounded by clearcuts and flammable, invasive weeds. We worry about wildfires and herbicides in our drinking water.

Oregon's population, business, farms and industries, have counted on the ecosystem services that our mature and old forests, estuaries and wetlands have provided for hundreds of years, but Oregon refused to accept that fact. Instead, we sacrificed the functional landscapes that we depend on for long term economic viability, human health and safety, for the sake of short-term industry profits and temporary economic benefits. Now we are increasingly feeling the impacts of their loss.

Many species have become increasingly scarce, and most of our major ecosystems are in terrible shape. Each time we lose a species, it is like removing another part from a car. If it keeps happening, soon the car will no longer run. The same is happening to the ecosystem services that few Oregonians are aware of, but that all of us depend on. We need to dedicate stable funding to work on repairing and reversing some of this destruction, and preventing permanent loss of Oregon's biodiversity.