

Submitter: David Judkins

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4134

HB 4134 is historic legislation that would protect our wildlife, safeguard communities, and strengthen our tourism economy that depends on a healthy environment, without increasing my cost of living.

This legislation protects wildlife and human health.

The health of people and our environment is inextricably linked. Keeping nature healthy keeps people healthy. Projects funded by this legislation will help protect and clean drinking water, support wild pollinators that are essential to our food and natural systems, and maintain species like bats that help control insect populations. These investments aren't just an investment in our environment; they're an investment in community health.

HB 4134 protects our fish, wildlife, and way of life. Oregon has a list of over 300 vulnerable species that require intervention. HB 4134 invests in conserving and restoring the habitat these species rely upon, while also supporting Oregonians' livelihoods, outdoor recreation, and quality of life. Communities in Oregon, especially our rural communities, rely on thriving, healthy environments that support our native wildlife.

This legislation will prevent endangered species conflicts. Recovering a species once it is imperiled enough to warrant listing under the state and federal Endangered Species Act is costly and can create a lot of conflict. By investing in proactive conservation, HB 4134 can avoid costly emergency intervention and conflicts down the road. It is an effective and fiscally responsible policy that will help wildlife and communities now and in the future.

Oregon's Department of Fish and Wildlife lacks stable funding, especially for non-game species. HB4134 changes that, addressing an issue that is plaguing state wildlife agencies across the country. This bill, supported by a diverse and bipartisan coalition, presents a historic policy opportunity.

HB 4134 strengthens our tourism and outdoor economy, without raising costs for residents. Because HB 4134 is funded by an increase in the transient lodging tax, a majority of the funding will not come from Oregon residents. Outdoor recreation is a \$16 billion industry in Oregon. We can keep that industry growing and thriving by investing in the wildlife and natural spaces that attract visitors, all while keeping Oregon's statewide lodging tax one of the lowest in the nation. I support HB 4134 and would gladly pay a few dollars more on my hotel bill to protect Oregon's natural legacy.

As a retired employee of ODFW with 31 years with the agency, I witnessed the elimination of its Habitat and Conservation Division in the late 1990s and was pleased when it was re-authorized in recent years. It has never been adequately funded to perform its mission in either iteration. ODFW staff are highly professional

and will apply funds generated by HB 4134 to achieve its intended goals responsibly and with demonstrably results.