

Submitter:

Erin Walker

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB4134

The health of people and our environment is inextricably linked. Keeping nature healthy keeps people alive. 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 are an investment in community health.

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.

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 addresses that and is supported by a diverse and bipartisan coalition.

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 still keeping Oregon's statewide lodging tax one of the lowest in the nation.

I support HB 4134 to ensure our living home remains living.