

Submitter: Marie Wakefield

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4134

Chair Nathanson and committee members, I support 1.25% for wildlife because-By increasing the Oregon tourism tax from 1.5% to 2.75% (still the third lowest nationwide) we can ensure long-term dedicated funding for our most imperiled wildlife and fish species, safeguard essential habitats, and improve ecosystem resiliency in the face of the twin biodiversity and climate crises. Why the tourism tax? Because wildlife and habitat are a huge draw for tourism to our state. People visit to whale watch on the coast, bird watch in the Malheur and Klamath regions, raft iconic rivers including the Rogue, McKenzie and Deschutes, and much more. Even folks who visit for other reasons get to enjoy our unique habitats and hopefully experience wildlife sightings as well. 65% of the folks who will pay the tax are out of state visitors. 1.25% for Wildlife is a common sense solution to an entrenched funding problem and an investment in our shared future.

The funds generated will be dedicated to implementing Oregon's State Wildlife Action Plan, Oregon Department of Wildlife's (ODFW's) Wildlife Connectivity Program, wildlife rehabilitation facilities via the Wildlife Stewardship program, anti-poaching efforts, Oregon Conservation' Corps' wildfire risk reduction and community resilience work, and other core conservation priorities that have been underfunded or entirely unfunded for decades.

HB 4134 would be a monumental win for Oregon's iconic fish, wildlife, and habitat!