

Submitter:

Willa Ralphs

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB4134

My name is Willa Ralphs and I live in Portland, Oregon. I am submitting this testimony in strong support of HB 4134 to increase the state lodging tax by 1.25% and help recover Oregon's most vulnerable fish, wildlife, and habitats. It is only right and fair that the tourists who come to enjoy our beautiful environment help to pay to keep it beautiful by paying a little bit more for their hotel rooms.

Oregon is an incredibly special place, and our state's identity is closely tied to its rich natural heritage, including native fish, wildlife, and the habitats that support them. Oregonians' love for the outdoors is known throughout this country and beyond. Oregonians like me are proud of our natural heritage and want to see it thrive for future generations.

Securing long-term dedicated funding to recover our most vulnerable fish, wildlife, and habitats, is strongly supported by a majority of Oregonians. I urge you to support this landmark bill, which would dedicate long-term funding to recover Oregon's most vulnerable fish, wildlife and habitats - all of which are critical for our state's tourism economy. Oregon's robust outdoor tourism economy - 2.6% of the state's GDP - supports 192,000 jobs and brings in \$16 billion in consumer spending. Investing in these resources now will continue to generate more economic opportunities for Oregon's communities in the future.

We cannot have a thriving tourism economy without healthy and abundant fish, wildlife, and the habitats that support them. This legislation would ensure we have both. At a time when the federal government is slashing funds and dismantling policies that protect our vulnerable fish and wildlife and their habitats, Oregon has a chance to set an example and protect our natural heritage. Doing so would make Oregon a national leader.

This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to protect our natural legacy and rich biodiversity, which make this state so special. Please pass HB 4134 this legislative session!

Thank you for your support,
Willa Ralphs