

Submitter: Debra Merskin
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4134

My name is Debra Merskin, I live in Powell Butte, in Crook County, and I am writing in strong support of the 1.25% for Wildlife bill (HB 4134). As someone who has spent years experiencing Oregon's landscapes firsthand, I've seen both the beauty of our wildlife and the growing pressures that threaten it. My experiences have made one thing clear: Oregon's wildlife needs dedicated, reliable funding, and the 1.25% for Wildlife measure is a practical, forward-looking solution that leverages visitor enthusiasm without adding an undue burden to their experience.

Throughout my decades in Oregon, I've watched how habitat loss, drought, wildfire, and human expansion have steadily reduced the spaces where wildlife can thrive. I've seen fewer pollinators in places where they once swarmed, fewer songbirds in areas that used to be full of them, and more animals pushed into conflict with people simply because they have nowhere else to go. These changes aren't abstract — they're visible, measurable, and deeply concerning.

What has always inspired me about Oregon is our shared belief that the outdoors is part of who we are. No matter someone's political party, whether they hunt, fish, hike, farm, or simply enjoy watching wildlife from their backyard, we all benefit from healthy ecosystems. But right now, our state's wildlife management system is underfunded and stretched thin. We rely heavily on outdated funding models that no longer match the needs of modern conservation and wildlife rehabilitation.

The 1% for Wildlife measure offers a fair, sustainable way to protect the species and habitats that make Oregon unique. It ensures that wildlife conservation is not an afterthought, but a priority supported by stable resources. This investment will help restore habitats, prevent species decline, reduce human wildlife conflict, and support science-based management that benefits every Oregonian, including those with paws, fins, and wings.

I've seen what happens when we wait too long to act — species disappear, ecosystems unravel, and the cost of restoration grows exponentially. I've also seen what happens when we invest early: landscapes recover, wildlife rebounds, and communities benefit. The 1% for Wildlife measure is an opportunity to choose the second path, and it is Oregon's wilderness and attitude toward the environment that brings visitors to our state.

Oregon has always been a leader in conservation. Passing this measure would continue that legacy and ensure that future generations inherit a state as rich in wildlife as the one we've been fortunate to enjoy. Please support HB 4134.

Thank you for your time and for considering this important investment in Oregon's natural future.

Respectfully,

Debra Merskin, PhD