

Submitter:

Dan Yaeger

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB4134

Chair Nathanson, my wife and I, along with our two children, live in the heart of your district. We are both health professionals. Today, I appeal to you to support a bill coming up in the short session, HB 4134.

The 1.25% for Wildlife bill will help support the Governor's Climate Executive Order, which we are enthusiastically supporting. In particular, while we grapple with the growing negative impacts of Climate Change, this funding stream will help the governor and our natural resource agencies protect 10% of our state's most climate-resilient lands and waters over the next decade. What is vital to us in Portland is that it focuses on maximizing benefits such as clean water, wildlife habitat, and community health. Portland is at grave risk; we have all experienced the increasing number of unhealthy air days. With young children, this is of utmost concern. This bill targets the needs of our most vulnerable communities.

The art of this bill is that this modest hotel motel tax increase of 1.25% will, according to my research, be paid for by 65% of visitors to our state who are attracted to our state by its natural beauty. This is their chance to invest in preserving our most significant asset: our natural landscapes and clean water.

I have read the spurious arguments opposing the threat to tourism. This, as you know, is utter nonsense. The hotel motel tax is the lowest in the nation, and visitors, if asked, would be happy to know that the modest fee was going to preserve our lands and waters against the impacts of climate change.

We have watched the state flourish when we invest in our Lands and waters. If the predictions hold and the new fee generates \$30 million annually, it will create between 450 and 720 new climate-resilience jobs annually. You can read more about the extraordinary job growth in the 2024 report commissioned by Travel Oregon.

Chair Nathanson, can we count on you to support this progressive, community health-focused bill? This is a chance for you to lead Oregon on a vital, new, community-health-focused path.

Sincerely,

Dan and Hannah

Dan Yaeger and Hannah Hoeflich