

Submitter: Elizabeth Ilem

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4134

Dear Chair Nathanson and Committee members,

As a person who enjoys and relies on Oregon's extensive wildlife habitats for recreation and mental health, I am writing in strong support of HB 4134 with the -1 amendment, which would increase the state lodging tax by 1.25% to provide much-needed, dedicated funding for the recovery of Oregon's most vulnerable fish, wildlife, and habitats.

Oregon's landscapes and wildlife are at the heart of what makes this state extraordinary. From our rivers and forests to the species that depend on them, our natural heritage shapes our identity and fuels our deep connection to the outdoors. Like many Oregonians, I value these resources not only for what they offer us today, but for what they represent for future generations. We have a shared responsibility to ensure that Oregon's fish, wildlife, and habitats are protected and restored so they can endure.

A clear majority of Oregonians support securing long-term, dedicated funding to recover our most vulnerable species and ecosystems. HB 4134 represents a thoughtful and forward-looking solution. By investing in conservation, this bill also strengthens Oregon's outdoor recreation and tourism economy, which accounts for 2.6% of the state's GDP, supports 192,000 jobs, and generates \$16 billion in consumer spending. Protecting the natural resources that draw visitors to Oregon is a smart economic investment in our communities.

A healthy tourism economy depends on healthy fish, wildlife, and habitats. HB 4134 would help ensure Oregon can sustain both. At a time when federal protections and funding for conservation are being reduced, this legislation gives Oregon the opportunity to lead by example and reaffirm our commitment to safeguarding our natural heritage.

This is a rare opportunity to make a lasting investment in Oregon's biodiversity and natural legacy. I respectfully urge you to support and pass HB 4134 with the -1 amendment this legislative session.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth K Ilem