



11675 SW Hazelbrook Road | Tualatin, OR | 97062 | (503) 218 2580 | tualatinriverkeepers.org | info@tualatinriverkeepers.org

February 2, 2026

Dear Chair Nathanson, Vice-Chairs Werner Reschke and Walters, and Members of the Committee,

I submit this testimony on behalf of Tualatin Riverkeepers, our 350 members, and thousands of annual volunteers. Tualatin Riverkeepers protects, restores and expands access to the Tualatin River watershed through advocacy and fostering broad community engagement. We envision a thriving Tualatin River watershed sustained by an engaged community who enjoys all of the benefits a healthy river system has to offer.

Tualatin Riverkeepers supports long-term, dedicated funding to prevent the decline of Oregon's imperiled fish, wildlife and habitats, and reduce wildfire risk on Oregon's landscape. HB 4134—"1.25% for Wildlife"—secures dedicated, sustainable funding for Oregon's imperiled wildlife, lands and waters by increasing the state transient lodging tax from 1.5% to 2.75% (an increase of 1.25%). Oregon's economy is heavily dependent on our natural landscapes, native wildlife, and healthy waters; however, Oregon is currently failing to invest meaningful resources in the recovery of at-risk species and habitats, many of which are significant drivers of tourism and critical to the state's economy. HB 4134 represents a wise investment in not only our present and future natural resources, but also in the reason so many visitors travel to Oregon.

Across the state, Oregon's diverse and bountiful array of flora and fauna foster a robust outdoor recreation economy that draws millions of visitors to our natural places each year. This includes Oregonians and millions of non-Oregonians who visit our state to enjoy these opportunities and support our robust tourism industry. A 2023 analysis revealed that Oregon's outdoor recreation industry accounted for 2.6% of the state's GDP, higher than the national average. Additionally, data from 2022 shows that Oregon's outdoor economy contributes to \$16 billion in consumer spending and supports 192,000 jobs. Outdoor recreation is critical to an economically healthy Oregon, and in many ways helps define us as a state. In the Tualatin Valley, outdoor recreation is part of the foundation of our tourism industry. Our scenic region offers year-round adventures ranging from tranquil hiking and biking trails to lush vineyards, wildlife-filled wetlands, and rivers perfect for paddling. All of these activities rely on healthy natural habitats and robust wildlife populations.

Many of Oregon's species and habitats face increasing challenges, putting their future at risk and threatening Oregon's tourism and recreation economy. At the request of Congress, Oregon developed the Oregon Conservation Strategy (now known as the State Wildlife Action Plan or SWAP) in 2005 to assess the health of Oregon's fish, wildlife, and habitat and create a roadmap



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of conservation actions needed to sustain them. The SWAP is updated every ten years, and as of 2025, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) has identified at least 321 species of greatest conservation need (a significant increase from 294 in the last iteration) and 11 types of native habitats needing proactive restoration actions.

More than 40 of these listed species can be found in the Tualatin River watershed, and much of the tourism and recreation in our watershed depends on the protection and restoration of these species and their habitats. The Tualatin Valley is home to several types of native habitats highlighted in the SWAP. The Tualatin River and its many tributaries are important flowing waters and riparian areas that are crucial for all fish and wildlife, providing essential habitat to many at-risk species. The health of the Tualatin River and its tributaries is also crucial for the humans that live in the Tualatin Valley, as they provide drinking water for over 600,000 residents. The riparian habitats also serve an important role in slowing water velocities during periods of high runoff and protecting streambeds from scouring and downcutting, and helping to mitigate the threat from increased urban stormwater. Between the river and its tributaries, grasslands, oak habitats, and several kinds of wetlands quilt the valley floor, while late successional mixed conifer forests protect and shade our headwaters.

Without direct and targeted interventions, these species and habitats will continue their downward spiral of decline and possible extinction. This will negatively impact the growth trajectory of Oregon's tourism and outdoor recreation industry.

Oregon's most vulnerable species, habitats and communities remain at risk without sufficient and consistent funding from the state. This threatens Oregon's natural legacy, its economy, and the thousands of Oregonians whose livelihoods depend on the outdoor recreation industry. Oregonians expect their legislators to care about Oregon's natural legacy—according to a 2025 poll, 71% of Oregonians responded that they believe protecting the biodiversity of Oregon should be a priority of state and national politicians. HB 4134 is a proactive solution that will directly help at-risk species, vulnerable habitats, and communities that depend on them. This bill also secures dedicated funding for Oregon's invasive species, wildfire risk reduction for communities with co-benefits for wildlife, wildlife stewardship, wolf depredation and compensation, anti-poaching, and wildlife connectivity programs. At a time when federal actions have destabilized programs that build resiliency of our at-risk wildlife, lands, and waters by eliminating staff capacity and on-the-ground resources, HB 4134 is an opportunity for Oregon to step up boldly and fulfill its responsibility to protect our most vulnerable natural communities. This increase to Oregon's state transient lodging tax would provide a steady, sustainable source of funds to ODFW to recover Oregon's most imperiled species and habitat and enhance biodiversity.



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For these reasons, Tualatin Riverkeepers support HB 4134 to protect and enhance Oregon's precious natural heritage.

Kelsey Shaw Nakama
Policy & Advocacy Director
Tualatin Riverkeepers