

Submitter:

Elizabeth Flake

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB4134

Dear Chair Nathanson and Committee members,

I am writing in strong support of HB 4134 with the -1 amendment, to increase the state lodging tax by 1.25% and provide necessary, dedicated funding to support the recovery of Oregon's most vulnerable fish, wildlife, and habitats.

Oregon's landscapes and wildlife are exceptional and why we all love our state. Like many Oregonians, I feel a strong responsibility to preserve these resources for today and generations to come. We all have a shared responsibility to ensure that Oregon's fish, wildlife, and habitats are protected and restored.

A strong 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.

I also strongly support Oregon's State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) to protect and recover our imperiled species and habitats.

Including the Wildlife Stewardship Program supporting wildlife rehabilitation facilities.

All of the anti-poaching efforts within the Oregon Department of Justice.

Also the investments in the Oregon Conservation Corps especially for wildfire risk reduction, community resiliency and natural resources workforce development.

Please make sure these efforts are funded to build a more resilient Oregon.

Living in a tourist town, I see how many people are drawn here for the natural beauty and recreation options. Oregon is known for its land protection and people are drawn to visit to see these places we protect. It is reasonable to ask tourists to pay a small tax to protect the environment in the places they want to visit. A healthy tourism economy depends on healthy fish, wildlife, and habitats. HB 4134 is a fair way to 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 stand out with our commitment to safeguarding our natural heritage.

You have a rare opportunity to do good by making a lasting investment in Oregon's biodiversity and natural legacy. Please support and pass HB 4134 with the -1

amendment this legislative session.

Respectfully,