

Submitter: Raj Patel
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4134
Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. I am writing to oppose House Bill 4134.

While I share the goal of protecting Oregon's natural resources and wildlife, I believe this bill's approach of increasing the state transient lodging tax is inappropriate and counterproductive.

1. Negative impact on Oregon's tourism economy.

Increasing the transient lodging tax will raise costs for visitors to Oregon. The tourism and hospitality industry is a critical economic engine for many communities — especially rural areas and small towns that depend on visitor spending for jobs and local revenue. A tax increase on lodging will make Oregon less competitive with neighboring states and could reduce travel and overnight stays, hurting small businesses, hospitality workers, and local economies.

2. Tax burden shifted to residents and small businesses.

Although framed as a revenue source for wildlife and natural resources, this tax increase places additional burden on families and workers who travel for business or leisure, as well as on operators of small lodging establishments. At a time when many Oregonians are already feeling financial pressure, raising taxes on a basic travel expense is not the right solution.

3. Legislative priorities should reflect broader public input.

Major tax increases — especially those that affect people across the state — deserve robust public discussion and a clear demonstration that other cost-neutral or less burdensome alternatives have been considered. This bill bypasses that broader debate and instead implements an immediate tax hike with limited advance community engagement.

Conclusion:

I oppose HB 4134 because the tax increase it authorizes will harm Oregon's tourism economy, unfairly burden travelers and small business owners, and set a concerning precedent for funding statewide priorities through regressive tax changes. I urge the committee to reject this proposal and explore alternative, equitable solutions for natural resource funding that do not jeopardize Oregon's economic recovery and small business vitality.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,
Raj.