

Submitter:

Kyenne Williams

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB4134

My name is Kyenne Williams, a native Oregonian born in Eugene, raised in Lincoln County and currently residing in Multnomah County. I strongly support HB 4134, including the -1 amendment to increase the state lodging tax by 1.25% and help recover Oregon's most vulnerable fish, wildlife, and habitats. When people ask me why I live here, I explain that my (and Oregon's) identity is deeply tied to its natural legacy. Our native fish, wildlife, and diverse habitats—including the high desert and sagebrush steppe—are central to what makes Oregon special and to why people choose to live, visit, and recreate here. We value wildlife and want to see it thrive and are proud of Oregon's natural heritage and care deeply about protecting it for future generations.

And I'm not alone: a strong majority of Oregonians support dedicated funding to recover vulnerable fish, wildlife, and habitats. HB 4134 provides long-term, dedicated funding for conservation. This bill would secure sustainable funding to recover Oregon's most at-risk species and habitats, including sagebrush ecosystems, connected wildlife corridors, and resilient landscapes that support biodiversity statewide. Healthy wildlife and habitats are essential to Oregon's economy. Oregon's outdoor recreation and tourism economy depends on healthy lands and waters. The outdoor economy contributes 2.6% of Oregon's GDP, supports 192,000 jobs, and generates \$16 billion in consumer spending.

Having grown up in Lincoln County, I know firsthand that we can't have a strong tourism economy without healthy ecosystems. Protecting fish, wildlife, and habitats is not separate from economic vitality—it is foundational to it. Investing in conservation now supports local communities and long-term economic resilience. People come here from all around the world to enjoy the beauty the state offers, from the high desert to the Cascade mountains, the rich agriculture and food culture of the Willamette Valley, and the splendor of the Oregon coast. State leadership is especially important right now. As federal funding and protections for wildlife and habitats are reduced, Oregon has an opportunity—and a responsibility—to step forward and invest in its natural legacy.

HB 4134 makes Oregon a national leader. Please pass this bill, and help Oregon set an example for how states can proactively protect biodiversity, reduce wildfire risk, support wildlife stewardship, and sustain healthy ecosystems.