

Submitter: Jean Battig

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4134

STOP PREDATORY PURPLE URCHINS.

Hi, my name is Jean and I am writing to support protection of Oregon wildlife habitats, particularly on the Oregon coast. Having lived part-time on the coast for several years I've had the opportunity to observe the effects of habitat changes out my front door. Our summer resident gray whales depend upon kelp to shelter the mysid shrimp that is one of their main food sources. NO KELP, NO WHALES, literally. Unfortunately the purple urchins have come in and over-populated, they actually eat kelp. The ocean out in front of us is 15 to 20 ft deep, the bottom is literally covered with purple urchins. When I look in the tide pools at low tide there's purple urchins everywhere. They're beautiful but they're super destructive. Guess what eats purple urchins?! SEA OTTERS!

Please pass House Bill 4134. Not only would the sea otters bring our coastal water habitat back into balance, sea otters would also increase whale populations and keep visitors flocking to our coast to see our amazing sea life!

Dr. Jean Battig, DVM.

I am writing to urge the Committee to support HB 4134.

Oregon's wildlife and the habitats they depend on are facing a crisis. Nearly 300 species are at elevated risk of extinction and multiple key habitats are in decline. Without sustainable, long-term funding, these species, their habitats, and the ecosystems they rely upon could be lost forever.

The 1.25% for Wildlife proposal would:

Generate reliable, dedicated funding for implementation of Oregon's State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) and related recovery efforts.

Support habitat restoration, species recovery, and community stewardship programs both on the coast and statewide.

Still leave Oregon with one of the lowest statewide tourism taxes in the country, even after the increase.

This funding mechanism is fair and balanced. The majority of the cost will be borne by out-of-state visitors who enjoy Oregon's world-class outdoor experiences - from salmon fishing and whale watching to birding and hiking.

This is not only an environmental imperative; it is also an investment in rural economies. By safeguarding the natural heritage that draws people to live in and visit Oregon, we strengthen local communities statewide.

A modest increase in the lodging tax – paid mostly by those from out of state – is a practical, responsible way to ensure Oregon's investment in its natural resources meets the scale of today's challenges, and those ahead.

Please make passage of HB 4134 (1.25% for Wildlife) a priority for passage in the 2026 session