

There are many reasons why this legislation is needed. I believe that people come to Oregon, and residents here love our state, because of the wild spaces it offers. Protecting them is protecting our economy. In fact, protecting them with this small and simple tax (the third lowest such tax in the nation even with the additional percentage) also protect our own health. There is no increase in the cost of living.

I moved here because I loved the city of Portland, and came often as a visitor. Would 1% extra have deterred me? Of course not, it's minimal, and if I wanted to come visit, I was coming to visit. I imagine most people are like that.

After I moved here I began to be aware of the breadth of nature that gives this place its magic. With only a little over 4 million of us in the whole state, we are blessed with open spaces for nature to thrive. And this reputation is deserved. Folks don't travel to or around Oregon for glitz and glamor and big city goings-on. While we have our share of industries, arts, culture and human-centric activities, people are here because they appreciate nature. Even residents, whether they know it or not, are getting all the things one doesn't get in the congested Eastern seaboard, or the empty sprawling farm fields of the Midwest and its cookie-cutter suburbs, or the concrete urbanity and oil fields of the central South.

We. Have. Nature. We have it all – beaches and dunes, mountains to stroll in or climb up upon, forests damp and mossy, high plains arid and rocky. Complex, robust – but really starting to struggle, and needing our help. To keep folks coming here. To keep us healthy. To keep our economy healthy.

We ask ourselves, do we like clean water? Projects funded by this legislation will help protect and clean drinking water. Do we like fruits and veggies? Project funded by this legislation support wild pollinators that are essential to our food and natural systems, and maintain species like bats that help control insect populations. These are investments in our collective health.

Do we like fish? Fishing? Wildlife? Bird watching? Hunting responsibly? Do we like clean shorelines that teem with life, or wildflowers in spring at Mt. Hood? Do we like spotting eagles and feeling proud our state supports majestic creatures? Do we like to see really big trees, knowing that we all collectively have found a way to protect them all these many hundreds of years against the odds? Do our kids like these things? HB 4134 invests in conserving and restoring the habitat of Oregon's 300+ vulnerable species that require intervention, while also supporting Oregonians' livelihoods, outdoor recreation, and quality of life.

Communities in Oregon, especially rural communities, rely on thriving, healthy environments that support our native wildlife. They don't rely on a hotel industry looking askance at a small tax increase aimed to preserve the very reason hotels are utilized.

Do we like when species go extinct? No. Of course we do not. Recovering a species once it is imperiled enough to warrant listing under the state and federal Endangered Species Act is costly and can create a lot of conflict. I think we all know this. This legislation will prevent endangered species conflicts. Oregon should be known as a state which invests in proactive conservation and proactive solutions. HB 4134 is a fiscally responsible policy that will help wildlife and communities now and in the future.

Oregon's Department of Fish and Wildlife lacks stable funding, especially for non-game species. Yet even hunting groups support this bill. They know that a fully functioning and healthy ecosystem all around is what supports their activities. HB 4134 addresses an issue – lack of funding - that is plaguing state wildlife agencies across the country. This bill, supported by a diverse and bipartisan coalition, presents a historic policy opportunity. People want this.

And for concerns about the budget? HB 4134 strengthens our tourism and outdoor economy, without raising costs for residents. And precisely because HB 4134 is funded by an increase in the transient lodging tax, a majority of the funding will not come from Oregon residents. Outdoor recreation is a \$16 billion industry in

Oregon. We are obliged to keep that industry growing and thriving by investing in the wildlife and natural spaces that attract visitors, all while still keeping Oregon's statewide lodging tax one of the lowest in the nation.

Let's do something great Oregon. Let's break a trail for ourselves - before it's too late to do anything nearly this easy and cost effective.