

Submitter: Charles Whitaker

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4134

I am writing to urge you to support HB 4134, the “1.25% for Wildlife” bill, a once-in-a-generation opportunity to secure stable funding for Oregon’s fish, wildlife, and habitats while strengthening our outdoor recreation and tourism economy.

HB 4134 represents one of the most significant conservation investments Oregon has made in decades. By increasing the statewide transient lodging tax by 1.25 percentage points, the bill would responsibly fund programs that protect our natural legacy while largely drawing revenue from visitors—approximately 65% of the tax is paid by out-of-state travelers, not Oregon residents.

Specifically, HB 4134 would provide stable funding for:

Oregon’s State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP), the state’s blueprint for conserving and restoring more than 300 vulnerable species and their habitats

The Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund, expanding access to outdoor recreation and community-based conservation projects statewide

ODFW’s Wildlife Connectivity Program, improving wildlife passage and addressing habitat fragmentation

Anti-poaching enforcement, strengthening Department of Justice and State Police capacity to combat illegal wildlife crimes

The Wolf Depredation Compensation and Financial Assistance Grant Program, helping reduce conflict and support coexistence

Invasive species detection and response, addressing long-standing gaps that threaten native ecosystems

The Wildlife Stewardship Program, including support for wildlife rehabilitation facilities

The Oregon Conservation Corps, investing in wildfire risk reduction, community resilience, and natural resources workforce development

Oregonians support HB 4134 because it:

Invests directly in Oregon’s natural legacy that supports livelihoods, recreation, and quality of life

Closes a long-standing funding gap with broad, bipartisan support from diverse stakeholders across the state

Strengthens wildfire preparedness while building Oregon’s conservation workforce

Reinvests in outdoor recreation, an \$8 billion industry that accounts for 2.6% of Oregon’s GDP

Does not raise the cost of living for most Oregonians and does not change Oregon’s ranking as having the third-lowest state lodging tax in the nation (from 1.5% to

2.75%)

HB 4134 would create durable, resilient funding for programs that protect the fish, wildlife, and habitats that make Oregon special—now and for future generations.

I respectfully ask for your support of HB 4134 and thank you for your leadership on behalf of Oregon's natural resources and communities.