

Attention: Chair Nathanson and members of the House Committee on Revenue

My name is Julie Furnas and I live in Bend, Oregon. I am submitting this testimony in strong support of HB 4134 with the -1 amendment to increase the state lodging tax by 1.25% and help recover Oregon's most vulnerable fish, wildlife, and habitats.

As we all know, Oregon is an incredibly special place, and our state's identity is closely tied to its rich natural heritage, including native fish, wildlife, and the habitats that support them. Oregonians' love for the outdoors is known throughout this country and beyond. Oregonians like me are proud of our natural heritage and want to see it thrive for future generations.

Securing long-term dedicated funding to recover our most vulnerable fish, wildlife, and habitats, is strongly supported by a majority of Oregonians. I urge you to support this landmark bill, which would dedicate long-term funding to recover Oregon's most vulnerable fish, wildlife and habitats - all of which are critical for our state's tourism economy. Oregon's robust outdoor tourism economy - 2.6% of the state's GDP - supports 192,000 jobs and brings in \$16 billion in consumer spending. Investing in these resources now will continue to generate more economic opportunities for Oregon's communities in the future.

We cannot have a thriving tourism economy without healthy and abundant fish, wildlife, and the habitats that support them. This legislation would ensure we have both. At a time when the federal government is slashing funds and dismantling policies that protect our vulnerable fish and wildlife and their habitats, Oregon has a chance to set an example and protect our natural heritage. Doing so would make Oregon a national leader.

This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to protect our natural legacy and rich biodiversity, which make this state so special. Please pass HB 4134 -1 this legislative session!

Key Details:

- The House Revenue Committee will have a public hearing on 1.25% for Wildlife (HB 4134) on Feb 4th. Please submit comments in support of the legislation - link is live to submit comments now! You can submit comments till 3pm on Friday Feb 6th.
- In 2025, we were successful in getting HB 2977 passed in the Oregon House of Representatives with bipartisan support but fell to political tactics in the Senate. We are determined to see this unfinished business through, and we need your strong advocacy to help ensure we get this critical legislation passed in 2026!
- HB 4134 is a bold, proactive solution to directly help at-risk species and habitats. Currently, the Oregon Dept of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) does not receive any dedicated funds from the state for the recovery and conservation of such species and habitats.
- Increasing Oregon's statewide lodging tax, currently one of the lowest in the country and will remain so even with the 1.25% increase, would provide a sustainable source of funds to ODFW to recover Oregon's most imperiled species and habitat and enhance biodiversity - all of which contribute to Oregon's tourism and outdoor recreation economy while keeping the tax at still one of the lowest in the country. This tax should include ALL 36 counties in Oregon.

As an Oregonian, we know how special the wildlife that call this place home - is. It defines our state and is closely tied to most Oregonians' values to see fish, wildlife and habitats not just survive but thrive. This legislation will protect Oregon's rich natural legacy into the future.

- With your advocacy, we have a real shot at passing this historic funding bill in the 2026 session and putting Oregon's most vulnerable wildlife on a better path.
- Protecting Oregon's wildlife and habitats also bolsters Oregon's robust outdoor tourism economy - 2.6% of the state's GDP - supports 192,000 jobs and \$16 billion in consumer spending. Investing in these resources now will continue to generate

more economic opportunities for Oregon's communities in the future.

- This legislation is a bold and proactive investment in Oregon's present and future prosperity, and a reinvestment in the reason so many visitors travel to Oregon.
- This legislation would be a monumental win for Oregon's iconic fish, wildlife, and habitat! It is a landmark bill that would show other states how to build a bipartisan coalition of statewide legislators, organizations and citizens to protect natural resources.

Thank you for your time and support,

Julie E. Furnas

Bend, Oregon