

Submitter: Doug Heiken

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4134

Chair Nathanson and members of the House Committee on Revenue:

My name is Doug Heiken and I live in Eugene, 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.

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.

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.

This bill represents an important investment in Oregon's present and future prosperity, and a reinvestment in the reason so many visitors travel to Oregon. 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.

Securing long-term dedicated funding to conserve and recover our most vulnerable fish, wildlife, and habitats, is strongly supported by a majority of Oregonians. 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.

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!