

Submitter:

Katherine McKeon

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB4134

Thank you, Chair Nathanson and members of the committee, for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 4134.

My name is Kate McKeon, and I am a resident of Newport, Oregon. Like many others, I was drawn to this state because of its extraordinary wildlife and public lands, which is why, when I had the opportunity to move to Newport, I leapt at the chance. I am a marine biologist, environmentalist, and science communicator, and I spend my days exploring tidepools, searching for orcas, and experiencing firsthand what makes Oregon's coast so special.

I also see how vulnerable these ecosystems are. Roughly 300 species in Oregon are already at an elevated risk of extinction, while the agencies and organizations working to protect them remain underfunded and understaffed. House Bill 4134 offers a practical, meaningful solution. For visitors, the cost is minimal-about the price of a cup of coffee or a sandwich-but for wildlife, the impact could be transformational.

Other states, like Hawaii, have implemented similar fees. But unlike Hawaii, Oregon would still maintain one of the lowest transient lodging tax rates in the country, even with this increase. This bill is not a burden on tourism; it is an investment in its future.

At a time when federal funding for conservation is being cut, it is more important than ever that Oregon step up to protect what makes this state unique. I urge you to pass House Bill 4134.

Thank you for your time and consideration.