



## Written Testimony in Opposition to HB 4134

**Submitted by:** Stacy Palmer, IOM

**Title/Organization:** Executive Director, Silverton Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center

**Date:** February 4, 2026

Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding **HB 4134**. I am writing in **opposition** to this bill due to the concerning precedent it sets for Oregon's statewide lodging tax and the potential long-term impacts on tourism-dependent communities.

HB 4134 proposes a **1.25% increase to Oregon's statewide lodging tax**, with the additional revenue dedicated to Fish and Wildlife habitat preservation. While I respect and support the goal of environmental stewardship, this legislation represents a significant shift in how lodging tax revenues are used and structured.

Oregon's lodging tax has historically been grounded in a clear and intentional principle: **funds generated by visitors should be reinvested in tourism promotion, destination management, and visitor-serving infrastructure**. This connection is essential to maintaining a healthy tourism economy—one that supports small businesses, local jobs, and rural communities across the state.

HB 4134 breaks from that principle by allowing **non-tourism-related industries to add dedicated percentages to the statewide lodging tax**. This sets a troubling precedent. If enacted, it opens the door for additional policy areas—however worthy—to seek funding through the lodging tax, gradually eroding its original purpose and placing increasing cost burdens on visitors and the tourism sector.

From a local perspective, communities like Silverton rely heavily on tourism-generated revenue to support economic vitality. Lodging taxes already represent a significant cost consideration for visitors, particularly as Oregon competes with neighboring states for overnight travel. Incremental increases—especially those unrelated to tourism—risk making Oregon a less competitive destination while providing no direct reinvestment into the visitor economy that generates the tax.

Moreover, once the precedent is established, it becomes difficult to draw a clear line. The lodging tax could evolve into a patchwork funding mechanism for unrelated state priorities, undermining transparency, accountability, and the trust of both visitors and local stakeholders.

Fish and Wildlife habitat preservation is an important and shared value in Oregon. However, **the lodging tax is not the appropriate vehicle to fund it.** There are more suitable, broad-based funding mechanisms that align more directly with the beneficiaries of those programs and do not compromise the integrity of Oregon's tourism funding structure.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to **oppose HB 4134** and preserve the longstanding intent and integrity of Oregon's lodging tax.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stacy Palmer". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Stacy Palmer, IOM  
Executive Director