

Submitter:

Roberta Jortner

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 Roberta Jortner, and I live in Portland, Oregon. I submit 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.

Some oppose this bill because they fear that an increase in Oregon's lodging tax will deter tourism. My husband and I have owned a vacation rental on the North Oregon Coast for more than 25 years and we do not share these concerns. Oregon will still have the 3rd lowest lodging tax rate in the country even with the increase. Plus, independent economic assessments conducted during the last session showed no discernable impact between modest tax rate changes and tourist spending levels.

As or more important, in recent surveys a strong majority of Oregonians asserted that maintaining biodiversity and protecting wildlife is important to them in their daily lives. This bill will provide the funding need to help accomplish this AND will support local communities and businesses that rely on tourism dollars. Oregon's robust outdoor tourism economy supports nearly 200,000 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.

The federal government is currently slashing funds and dismantling policies that protect our vulnerable fish and wildlife and their habitats, Oregon cannot afford to look the other way. Please support "1.25% for Wildlife" by passing HB 4134.

Sincerely,

Roberta Jortner