



OREGON HUNTERS ASSOCIATION

Protecting Oregon's Wildlife, Habitat and Hunting Heritage

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House Committee on Revenue
RE: HB 4134 Support

Chair Nathanson Vice-Chairs Reschke and Walters, Members of the Committee,

The Oregon Hunters Association (OHA) is Oregon's largest state-centric hunter conservation organization, representing over 12,000 sportsmen and women throughout the state. Our mission is 'to protect Oregon's wildlife, habitat, and hunting heritage' and we strongly support science-based wildlife and habitat management.

OHA strongly supports HB 4134.

Raising the transient lodging tax (TLT) by 1.25% creates a sustained funding source specific to the implementation of the Statewide Action Plan (SWAP), previously known as the Oregon Conservation Strategy, by Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW). With over 300 species and 12 key habitats listed for the SWAP, the need to invest in conservation of our wildlife is imperative.

As the committee is aware, Oregon's hunters and anglers sustain ODFW by historically providing 40-55% of the agency's budget both in direct sales of licenses and tags and through federal excise taxes paid on firearms, ammunition, and fishing gear. However, these dollars, both state and federal, are allocated to specific programs, primarily with focus on game animal conservation.

Adequate funding for the conservation of non-game species, and key habitats, must be secured for the betterment of all Oregon's wildlife. As wildlife is held in the public trust, every Oregonian is a constituent of ODFW's work toward conservation of wildlife and their habitats.

The most straightforward option to all Oregonians assisting in ODFW's budget and paying for wildlife conservation would be an increase in the budget allocation from the General Fund (GF). However, the GF historically makes up a small percentage of ODFW's budget, approximately 10%, on average. Unfortunately, with the chronic underfunding of our natural resource agencies, and the increased financial pressures on this legislative body, the use of GF dollars cannot be seen as a viable option.

The 1.25% increase in the TLT provides an appropriate vehicle for Oregonians, and those visiting our beautiful state, to contribute to ODFW's mission. It is an alternative with a direct nexus between tourism, driven in part by the myriad activities related to Oregon's abundant fish, wildlife, natural landscapes, and investing in the conservation of those same attributes.

Outdoor recreation is a primary economic driver in every region of the state. The [Oregon Outdoor Recreation Economic Impact Study](#) completed by Travel Oregon in partnership with Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, Oregon Office of Outdoor Recreation, Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife, and Earth Economics, highlights the economic importance of Oregon's "vast range of outdoor recreational opportunities to the state's economy."

The study found that in 2019 outdoor recreationists spent **\$15.6 billion** in Oregon, supporting **224,000 jobs**, **\$9.3 billion** in wages and compensation, **\$13 billion** in GDP contributions, and **\$552 million** in state and local taxes.

Specific economic impacts directly attributed to fishing, hunting, and wildlife watching, included in the table below, account for **\$1.2 billion** in spending and **11,000 jobs**.

Summary of Data					
Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Watching contribute significant economic benefit to the state of Oregon. In 2019, there was over \$1.2 billion in spending by local recreationists and visitors, which supported over 11,000 jobs related to these activities. Additionally, these activities generated \$385 million in labor income and \$51 million in state and local taxes.					
All data presented below is in 2019 dollars and was computed by Earth Economics as part of Travel Oregon's Outdoor Recreation Economic Impact Study, produced in partnership with Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, Oregon Office of Outdoor Recreation, and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.					
Additional information can be found here: https://industry.traveloregon.com/resources/research/oregon-outdoor-recreation-economic-impact-study/					

COUNTY	Activity	Spending	Employment	Wages	State and Local Tax
All Counties	HUNTING	\$227,820,317.30	2,219	\$72,522,087.99	\$10,575,198.21
All Counties	FISHING	\$396,865,949.46	3,669	\$124,016,366.97	\$17,052,599.24
All Counties	WILDLIFE WATCHING	\$578,752,499.00	5,773	\$188,618,512.58	\$23,537,221.91
All Counties	Grand Total	\$1,203,438,765.77	11,661	\$385,156,967.54	\$51,165,019.35

Outdoor recreation definitively benefits Oregon's tourism-based economy. As such, we have a responsibility to ensure our natural spaces, wildlife, and their critical habitats are conserved and cared for, for their benefit as well as the State's. To do so, we must allocate the necessary funds for critical programs such as ODFW's State Wildlife Action Plan, invasive species response, anti-poaching efforts, wildlife connectivity, wildlife rehabilitation work, wolf depredation compensation, the Oregon Conservation & Recreation Fund, and the Oregon Conservation Corp.

There is a clear nexus between tourism and Oregon's wildlife which provides economic benefits throughout the state. That same nexus must be used to reinvest into our wildlife, their critical habitats, and our working lands for the betterment of all.

OHA supports the conservation efforts of ODFW and the positive effect a 1.25% increase in the TLT would have on the conservation of our species and habitats.

Thank you for your time,
 Amy Patrick
 On behalf of Oregon Hunters Association