

Written Testimony in Opposition to HB 4134

Submitted by: Megan Recker

Regarding: House Bill 4134

Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to respectfully express my opposition to House Bill 4134, which proposes an increase to Oregon's state transient lodging tax beginning January 1, 2027.

While I strongly support Oregon's natural resources, wildlife conservation efforts, and the long-term health of our state, I do not support increasing lodging taxes on visitors as the mechanism to fund these priorities.

Oregon's visitors already pay a layered and often confusing combination of state and local lodging taxes. In many communities, total lodging taxes are already high compared to competing destinations. Increasing the state transient lodging tax further risks making Oregon less competitive at a time when travel demand remains sensitive to cost, inflation, and economic uncertainty.

Tourism is a critical economic engine for Oregon, supporting small businesses, rural communities, hospitality workers, and local governments. Lodging taxes are ultimately paid by guests, but their impact is felt by operators and communities when higher prices suppress demand, shorten stays, or push travelers to choose alternative destinations. This is especially concerning for small lodging providers, rural operators, and regions that rely heavily on overnight visitors rather than day travel.

Additionally, rebranding portions of the tax as a "nature conservation fee" does not change the reality that this is a mandatory tax increase on visitors, not a voluntary contribution. Visitors may perceive this as another added cost rather than a transparent or choice-based way to support conservation, which could negatively affect their perception of Oregon as a welcoming destination.

I believe there are more balanced and sustainable ways to fund wildlife and conservation efforts that do not disproportionately rely on tourism or place additional financial burden on visitors. Conservation funding is important, but it should be pursued through mechanisms that do not risk undermining the very tourism economy that helps support Oregon's communities and public services.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to oppose HB 4134.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Megan Recker

Owner & Director

Lifestyle Properties, LLC

100 N Springbrook Road

Newberg, OR 97132

Direct: 503.564.0015

megan@destinationwillamette.com