

1% for Wildlife Testimony

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Hello, my name is Kiera Brown. I am a resident of Vancouver, WA but am testifying today as a frequent visitor to Portland and on behalf of my community in Portland. Collectively, we are strong supporters of HB 4134, which would increase the state lodging tax by 1.25% and help recover Oregon's most vulnerable fish, wildlife, and habitats.

Taxing recreation to support habitat restoration is common sense; visitors to Oregon often come seeking the natural beauty. Our native fish, wildlife, and diverse habitats are central to what makes Oregon special and to why people choose to live, visit, and recreate here. Additionally, with federal funding more volatile, it's even more important to pass State bills to protect these important natural resources.

Natural resources don't just benefit the tourism industry. As a water treatment engineer, I support habitat restoration for its benefits on the future of water in both Oregon and Washington. For example, restoring beavers (and their dams) to waterways improves water quality¹, reduces wildfire intensity², and makes our water sources more resilient to drought³. Setting aside funding to protect and restore habitat is an investment in our state's water future and fire preparedness, which will become increasingly important as droughts become more frequent and more intense. Rather than designing increasingly expensive water treatment systems (that we will then pay for in our water bills), why not let a beaver do the work for us? We don't even have to pay the beavers.

Passing this bill could pave the way for other states to invest in habitat restoration. We don't have to rely on our federal government to plan for the future—we hold the keys today.

¹ Jordan and Fairfax. (2022), Beaver: the North American freshwater climate action plan. WIRES Water. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1002/wat2.1592>

² Fairfax, E. and Whittle, A. (2020), Smokey the Beaver: beaver-dammed riparian corridors stay green during wildfire throughout the western USA. *Ecol Appl.* Accepted Author Manuscript. doi:10.1002/eap.2225

³ Fairfax, E, Small, EE. Using remote sensing to assess the impact of beaver damming on riparian evapotranspiration in an arid landscape. *Ecohydrology*. 2018; 11:e1993. <https://doi.org/10.1002/eco.1993>