

Submitter: Corinne Sherton

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4134

My name is Corinne Sherton. I am writing 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. Oregonians value wildlife and want to see it thrive. Many of us are proud of Oregon's natural heritage and care deeply about protecting it for future generations.

A strong majority of Oregonians support dedicated funding to recover vulnerable fish, wildlife, and habitats. HB 4134 provides that long-term, dedicated funding for conservation. This bill would secure sustainable funding to recover Oregon's most at-risk species and habitats, including sagebrush ecosystems, connected wildlife corridors, and resilient landscapes that support biodiversity statewide. Healthy wildlife and habitats are essential to Oregon's economy. Oregon's outdoor recreation and tourism economy depends on healthy lands and waters. The outdoor economy contributes 2.6% of Oregon's GDP, supports 192,000 jobs, and generates \$16 billion in consumer spending.

State leadership is especially important right now. As federal funding and protections for wildlife and habitats are reduced, Oregon has an opportunity—and a responsibility—to step forward and invest in its natural legacy. HB 4134 would make Oregon a national leader. By passing this bill, Oregon can set an example for how states can proactively protect biodiversity, reduce wildfire risk, support wildlife stewardship, and sustain healthy ecosystems.

One of the main reasons I decided, over 50 years ago, to make Oregon my home was my appreciation for the state's natural heritage and biodiversity. For many years I have enjoyed hiking, camping, rafting, birding, wildflowers and the multitude of lichen species found in Oregon. Please step up to make sure this natural heritage is preserved for future generations.