

Submitter:

Mollie Matteson

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB4134

Hello, my name is Malia Matteson. I have lived in Bend for three years. I also lived in Oregon for six years in the 1990s. I moved back to Oregon for its quality of life, natural landscapes, and abundant wildlife, and I love living here. I have an MS in wildlife biology, and worked for many years as an environmental activist for public lands protection and endangered species. I now work as a therapist; helping people to re-discover peace and purpose in their lives, through connection to nature, is central to my work.

I am writing in support of HB 4134, which would increase the state lodging tax by 1.25% to help create a stable funding source for our state's imperiled species and habitats. A significant portion of Oregon's economy depends on its natural beauty, healthy land and waters, and the flourishing of wild ecosystems alongside its human communities. In a tourism-based town like Bend, this is very obvious to see, but this is true throughout the state, across which I have traveled widely.

"Economics" is not just about numbers, revenue streams and "jobs." It is about the values that we hold collectively, reflected in transactions and investments, and what we preserve and pass on to posterity. I would venture to say that most Oregonians don't just live here for their jobs. What makes living here worthwhile is how we feel connected to the land, and to people held in a collective sense of belonging to a place.

Ecological wealth is our greatest wealth, and it is imperative that we consciously protect it, lest it be lost to individual avarice and short-sightedness. Please vote in favor of this bill, and for Oregon's present and future well-being.