

Chair Nathanson and members of the House Committee on Revenue

My name is Tracey Stuart and I live in Terrebonne, Oregon. I am submitting this testimony 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.

Oregon is an incredibly special place, and our state's identity is closely tied to its rich natural heritage, including native fish, wildlife, and the habitats that support them. Oregonians' love for the outdoors is known throughout this country. Oregonians like me are proud of our natural heritage and want to see it thrive for future generations.

HB 4134 is a bold, proactive solution to directly help at-risk species and habitats. Currently, the Oregon Dept of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) does not receive any dedicated funds from the state for the recovery and conservation of such species and habitats.

Increasing Oregon's statewide lodging tax, currently one of the lowest in the country and will remain so even with the 1.25% increase, would provide a sustainable source of funds to ODFW to recover Oregon's most imperiled species and habitat and enhance biodiversity - all of which contribute to Oregon's tourism and outdoor recreation economy while keeping the tax at still one of the lowest in the country.

We cannot have a thriving tourism economy without healthy and abundant fish, wildlife, and the habitats that support them. This legislation would ensure we have both. At a time when the federal government is slashing funds and dismantling policies that protect our vulnerable fish and wildlife and their habitats, Oregon has a chance to set an example and protect our natural heritage. Doing so would make Oregon a national leader.

I urge you to support this landmark bill. This is an opportunity to protect our natural legacy and rich biodiversity, which makes this state so special. Please pass HB 4134 -1 this legislative session!

Thank you,

Tracey Stuart
Terrebonne, Oregon