

Date: February 6, 2026

To: House Committee on Revenue

Subject: Written testimony in support of HB 4134 and the amendment to increase the state lodging tax by 1.25% to help recover Oregon's fish, wildlife and habitats

My name is Mary Ellen Collentine and I live in Oregon. I have been an Oregon resident for more than four decades. My husband I had a choice in where we wanted to live and work. We chose Oregon. We made our home here many years ago because of the opportunities to experience all of the natural wonders that Oregon offers, including fish, wildlife, diverse habitats, and outstanding outdoor recreation. This includes the phenomenal high desert and sagebrush steppe, which we love to visit and explore. These values are what makes Oregon so special to the people who live here.

Unfortunately, there are many pressures on these resources and I have sadly seen reduction or loss of habitat, wildlife and fish species. What was once abundant is now under threat, which means a ripple effect of impacts not only to the biodiversity of the natural world, but also to Oregon's outdoor recreation economy. Recreation depends on healthy habitats, and the recreation economy is under threat when habitats and wildlife are lost. Oregon's outdoor recreation is 2.6% of Oregon's GDP, and generates \$16 Billion in consumer spending, a significant contributor to Oregon's economic wellbeing and job creation, especially in central and rural Oregon.

Many Oregonians from all parts of the state value our natural resources and wildlife, and care deeply about protecting these resources for future generations. This is one of the issues that unites us across the state.

Our natural resources are under threat not only at the state level, but also at the federal level. As federal funding and protections for wildlife and habitat are reduced, Oregon can take a leadership role for Oregonians to protect what we love here in our state. By protecting biodiversity, reducing wildfire risk, supporting wildlife stewardship, and sustaining healthy ecosystems we can set an example for how other states can invest for their future.

Thank you

Mary Ellen Collentine