

Dear Chair Nathanson and Committee members,

I am writing in strong support of HB 4134.

I moved to Oregon in 2008 and quickly fell in love with the extraordinary beauty of our state and the endless opportunities to get outside and immerse myself in nature. I was drawn here by the wild places and the incredible diversity of animals that call the Pacific Northwest home. Whether I'm walking through a moss-covered forest in the Gorge, watching light filter through the trees, listening to rushing water nearby, or stopping to observe a banana slug inching across the trail, these moments remind me why Oregon is such a special place to live.

What makes Oregon truly exceptional is the richness of its wildlife. From sea stars and tidepool creatures along the coast, to pikas calling out from rocky slopes, to birds, mammals, amphibians, and insects that thrive in our forests, rivers, deserts, and wetlands—this diversity is something I deeply value. These encounters spark curiosity, joy, and a sense of connection, not just for me, but for visitors and families experiencing Oregon's natural wonders for the first time. Our wildlife and landscapes are central to Oregon's identity and to the experiences that draw people here.

The economic case for supporting this legislation is also clear. Wildlife-based recreation in Oregon generates approximately \$1.2 billion annually and supports more than 11,000 jobs. Wildlife watching alone contributes \$579 million in direct spending and \$23.5 million in state and local tax revenue each year. When wildlife populations and habitats decline, this economic benefit—and the vitality of communities across the state—declines with them. Protecting wildlife is both a shared responsibility and a shared benefit.

A clear majority of Oregonians support securing long-term, dedicated funding to recover our most vulnerable species and ecosystems, and HB 4134 provides a thoughtful, forward-looking solution. Oregon currently has the third-lowest state lodging tax rate in the nation, and increasing it by 1.25 percentage points would not change that ranking. Even when local lodging taxes are considered, Oregon communities remain below or well below comparable destinations in other states.

A healthy tourism economy depends on thriving wildlife and healthy habitats. HB 4134 represents a rare opportunity to make a lasting investment in Oregon's biodiversity and natural legacy.

I respectfully urge you to support and pass HB 4134 this legislative session. As an Oregon taxpayer, this is exactly the kind of investment I want my tax dollars to support—protecting the wildlife and natural places I love, now and for future generations.

Sincerely,

Michael Hogan