



**CASCADIA
WILDLANDS**
We like it wild.

February 6, 2026

Chair Nathanson, Vice-Chairs Reschke and Walters and committee members,

I write on behalf of Eugene-based Cascadia Wildlands and our over 18,500 members and supporters in strong support of 1.25% for Wildlife - HB 4134 with the -1 amendment. Oregon's wildlife and their habitats are one of Oregon's greatest treasures - drawing tourists to visit our state and beloved by those of us who are lucky enough to call Oregon home.

1.25% for Wildlife is a common sense solution to an entrenched funding problem and an investment in our shared future. Our State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) now identifies over 300 species as being at risk - with more than a third of the fish and wildlife species in our state in decline - yet biennium after biennium the legislature fails to allocate adequate general fund dollars to the programs this bill will fund. This bipartisan, broadly supported bill will generate long-term reliable funding for conservation efforts including implementation of the SWAP, ODFW's Wildlife Connectivity Program, wildlife rehabilitation facilities via the Wildlife Stewardship program, anti-poaching efforts, Oregon Conservation' Corps' wildfire risk reduction and community resilience work, and other core conservation priorities that have been chronically underfunded or entirely unfunded. Let's invest in the foundation of our tourism industry, in what makes Oregon such a desirable place to live and visit, in resilience as we face increasing climate-driven wildfire risks and in addressing the biodiversity loss crisis. This straightforward solution is more needed now than ever before as federal funding is being cut, delayed, or entirely denied.

Suggestions that the lodging market in the Eugene-Springfield area could not absorb a 1.25% increase, or that such a minor increase would jeopardize events being hosted in the area are frankly laughable. Prices there fluctuate wildly based on events. For example a search for hotel prices for two weekends in mid-November and early Dec.- yielded wildly varying hotel pricing. On one weekend the Maverick Hotel - a mid-range hotel on Eugene's Franklin Boulevard was \$105/night while the second weekend they were \$498/night - that's a 5 fold increase - the only difference? A Duck's home football game. This was true for every hotel. This happens consistently - prices drastically increase for University of Oregon graduation, for track and field events, and for popular concerts. During the Olympic trials, furnished AirBNB homes in the University neighborhood were renting for \$30,000 a month rather than the more usual \$4,000.

Upcoming events mentioned in testimony in opposition to the bill likewise result in enormous price inflation. Comparing the weekend before the Eugene marathon in April and the weekend of the marathon, one higher end hotel - The Graduate by Hilton has rooms for \$219/night the weekend prior and \$1,323 the weekend of the marathon. Similarly, comparisons of prices the weekend prior to the NCAA track and field championship in June and the weekend of the event demonstrate significant price elasticity. Low budget Motel Six offers rooms the weekend prior for \$90/night while the days of the meet those same rooms are \$425/night. If it were true that the tourism industry was so vulnerable to minor price increases in room rates, this kind of price gouging would not be tolerated by the market. Instead, events are regularly scheduled in the area and hotels regularly sell out even at rates 2-6 times those of non-event dates. Indeed most area hotels are already fully booked for the June NCAA track meet dates.* The industry is clearly comfortable with inflating rates based on the event drawing people to visit across hotel rooms from low-budget to high-end. These markets can and will absolutely absorb a \$1.25 for every \$100 increase. Importantly, every cent of the funds generated will be spent here in Oregon, investing directly back into our economy.

HB 4134-1 is an Oregon Conservation Network and Oregon Wildlife Coalition priority bill. It is also an Environmental Caucus legislative priority. The broad and diverse

coalition supporting this bill - which includes voices usually on opposing sides of legislative issues both in terms of interest groups and legislators themselves - shows just how significant an opportunity this bill is to address a long-standing funding challenge for a core value for Oregonians - fish and wildlife conservation.

Please vote Yes on HB 4134 -1.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bethany Cotton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Bethany" on the top line and "Cotton" on the bottom line.

Bethany Cotton
Conservation Director
Cascadia Wildlands

** We are happy to provide records of the hotel searches cited above upon request.*