

Submitter: August Welch

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4134

Hi, my name is August Welch. I am a registered geologist and environmental consultant who works in environmental remediation and the cleanup of properties with legacy contamination. I live in Portland, OR and I am a constituent of Congressional District 21. I am also a father, a hunter, angler and avid outdoorsman.

House Bill 4134 has support from diverse group of stakeholders both Democrats and Republicans support this event. The list of supporters also includes both Wildlife Conservation organizations and fishing hunting groups from both urban, and rural areas of Oregon. 1.25% for wildlife represents a significant opportunity to provide a sustainable funding source to help protect some of our most vulnerable sections of the ecosystem. Current revenue from hunting and fishing licenses helps conserve habitat for species that are hunted and fished, but it isn't enough. We need sustainable funding to protect the most vulnerable species in our ecosystem, not just the species that are regularly hunted and fished. This Bill will also provide sustainable funding for improved anti-poaching efforts, improved wildlife migration corridors and crossings, and reduce the risk of wildfires across the state.

We have a once in a generation opportunity to pass a historic Bill to protect our natural legacy and rich biodiversity at a time when federal government is slashing funds and dismantling policies to protect our most vulnerable fish and wildlife species and their habitats.

Oregon has a chance under this State Legislature's leadership to set an example for protection of our natural heritage and make Oregon a national leader in proactive wildlife conservation efforts. Currently we have one of the lowest tourism taxes in the nation. 1.25% for wildlife makes sense for all sectors of the population and will not raise the cost of living for Oregon residents, nor inhibit our already strong tourism industry. This funding source will also help create new jobs and strengthen our economic health.

We as humans are intimately connected with the ecosystem that we live in and rely upon. It our responsibility to provide sustainable funding sources to help protect our wildlife neighbors for our children and future generations and all parts of both urban and rural populations of Oregon. I ask that the Legislature understand the importance and urgency of this Bill and that it is prioritized for passing during this 2026 legislative session.

Sincerely,
August Welch, RG