

Submitter: Claire Phillips
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4134
Senate Committee,

My name is Claire Phillips, and I live in Welby, Oregon. I am writing 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's identity is deeply tied to its natural legacy. Our native fish and wildlife—and the diverse habitats that sustain them, from coastal estuaries to the high desert and sagebrush steppe—are central to what makes our state special and to why people choose to live, visit, and recreate here. Places like the Sagebrush Steppe in eastern Oregon and the forests and rivers that feed into the Columbia River are not just landscapes; they are part of our shared identity.

Oregonians value wildlife and want to see it thrive. Many of us are proud of Oregon's natural heritage and care deeply about protecting it for future generations. A strong majority of Oregonians support dedicated funding to recover vulnerable fish, wildlife, and habitats, and this bill reflects those shared values.

HB 4134 provides long-term, dedicated funding for conservation. It would secure sustainable funding to recover Oregon's most at-risk species and habitats, including sagebrush ecosystems, connected wildlife corridors, and resilient landscapes that support biodiversity statewide. This kind of proactive investment is far more effective and fiscally responsible than waiting until species are on the brink of extinction.

Healthy wildlife and habitats are essential to Oregon's economy. Oregon's outdoor recreation and tourism economy depends on healthy lands and waters. The outdoor economy contributes 2.6% of Oregon's GDP, supports 192,000 jobs, and generates \$16 billion in consumer spending. We cannot have a strong tourism economy without healthy ecosystems. Protecting fish, wildlife, and habitats is not separate from economic vitality—it is foundational to it. Investing in conservation now supports local communities and long-term economic resilience.

State leadership is especially important right now. As federal funding and protections for wildlife and habitats are reduced, Oregon has an opportunity—and a responsibility—to step forward and invest in its natural legacy. HB 4134 would make Oregon a national leader. By passing this bill, our state can set an example for how states can proactively protect biodiversity, reduce wildfire risk, support wildlife stewardship, and sustain healthy ecosystems.

On a personal level, Oregon's landscapes have shaped my life. Time spent outdoors—whether walking local trails, visiting eastern Oregon's open high desert, or traveling to see our rivers and forests—has given me a deep appreciation for the richness and fragility of our ecosystems. I have seen firsthand how habitat loss, drought, and wildfire affect the places and species we love. Investing in Oregon's biodiversity is important to me because I want future generations to experience the same sense of wonder, connection, and pride in our natural heritage that I have felt.

HB 4134 with the -1 amendment is a practical, forward-looking solution that aligns with Oregon's values and economic interests. I respectfully urge you to support this bill and help ensure that Oregon's fish, wildlife, and habitats continue to thrive for generations to come.

Thank you for your consideration.