

Submitter: Karly Foster

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4134

My name is Karly Foster, and I live in Springfield, 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.

I am a fourth-generation Oregonian from a fishing family that depends on wild salmon. Oregon's rivers and coastal waters are not just beautiful places to me—they are part of my family's livelihood, heritage, and identity. I also hold a master's degree in environmental science and natural resources, and I understand both personally and professionally how essential healthy wildlife populations and intact ecosystems are to long-term sustainability and ecosystem health.

Oregon's identity is deeply tied to its natural legacy. Our native fish, wildlife, and diverse habitats are central to what makes Oregon special and to why people choose to live, visit, and recreate here. From salmon-bearing rivers to sagebrush landscapes that support imperiled species, these places define our state.

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. HB 4134 provides the kind of long-term, dedicated funding that is necessary to move from short-term fixes to lasting solutions.

This bill would secure sustainable funding to recover Oregon's most at-risk species and habitats, including old-growth forests, sagebrush ecosystems, connected wildlife corridors, and resilient landscapes that support biodiversity statewide. Healthy wildlife and habitats are also essential to Oregon's economy. Our 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, protects working lands and waters, and strengthens 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. By passing HB 4134,

Oregon can set an example for how states can proactively protect biodiversity, reduce wildfire risk, support wildlife stewardship, and sustain healthy ecosystems.

As someone whose family depends on wild salmon and whose professional training centers on environmental science and natural resource management, I see firsthand what is at stake. Investing in Oregon's biodiversity is not an abstract policy issue for me—it is about ensuring that future generations of Oregonians can fish our rivers, work on the water, explore our high desert, and inherit landscapes that are thriving, not diminished.

I respectfully urge you to support HB 4134 with the -1 amendment. Thank you for your leadership and for your commitment to Oregon's future.

Sincerely,

-Karly Foster

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