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Portland Eugene Bend Enterprise

February 25, 2026

Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: Testimony in support of HB 4134 (1.25% for Wildlife)

Chair Broadman, Vice-Chair McClane, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Oregon Wild's 20,000 members and supporters, we submit the following comments in strong support for HB 4134 with the -1 amendment. This legislation, commonly referred to as 1.25% for Wildlife, will provide dedicated, sustainable funding for Oregon's imperiled wildlife, lands and waters by increasing the state transient lodging tax by 1.25%. This bill isn't just smart policy, it is urgent and necessary to address Oregon's growing biodiversity crisis. Our state's list of "species of greatest conservation need" now tops 300. Together with actions at the Federal level to defund fish, wildlife, and habitat conservation and to remove bedrock protections for endangered species, we desperately need Oregon leaders to step up.

Oregon Wild was founded over fifty years ago and works to protect and restore Oregon's wildlands, wildlife, and waters as an enduring legacy for future generations. We have worked for over a decade in collaboration with partners and lawmakers to identify alternative sources of funding to support the Department of Fish and Wildlife's broad conservation mission. The agency has been plagued by funding shortfalls, leaving Oregon's growing list of imperiled species without critical resources for their protection and restoration. HB 4134 is the culmination of these years of work and represents a logical, enduring, and transformational solution.

With a very modest increase in our state's tourism tax, we can provide crucial resources to programs important to Oregonians from every corner of the state. HB 4134 will support implementation of Oregon's State Wildlife Action Plan, our blueprint to protect and recover imperiled species and habitats. It will also support the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund, wildlife rehabilitation, anti-poaching efforts, wolf coexistence programs, wildlife

connectivity, invasive species response, and wildfire risk reduction and workforce development through the Oregon Conservation Corps.

It does all of this good for wildlife, habitat, and communities, while keeping Oregon's tourism tax one of the very lowest in the country. Oregon has the third-lowest state lodging tax rate out of all 50 states. With the 1.25% increase, Oregon will still have the third-lowest state lodging tax rate out of all 50 states.

Cynical arguments that HB 4134 will harm the tourism industry ignore the fact that Oregon's natural resources – our wildlife and wild places – are a driving force that attract visitors to our state. Outdoor recreation alone is a \$16 billion industry in Oregon and makes up 2.6% of the state's GDP. We simply cannot have a thriving tourism economy without healthy and abundant fish, wildlife, and the habitats that support them. This legislation would ensure we have both. Indeed, Travel Oregon ads could easily be mistaken for Oregon Wild advocacy videos with their depictions of thriving ecosystems and abundant wildlife – all images used to entice investment in our tourism economy.

This bill enjoys bipartisan support in both chambers, which is a testament to the thought and care that went into its development. And we are very proud to be part of a diverse coalition of supporters for this bill. Organizations that have for years been on opposing sides have come together to inform and support HB 4134. In this fraught and divisive political moment, we sincerely hope this doesn't go unnoticed or unappreciated by lawmakers.

We urge you to support HB 4134 with the -1 amendment and achieve a monumental victory for Oregon's iconic fish, wildlife, and habitat.

Respectfully,

Quinn Read
Executive Director
Oregon Wild