

Submitter: Dan and Mrs. Jan Blair
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4134

We write as two of your constituents in strong support of HB 4134. This bill, supported by a diverse and bipartisan coalition, presents a historic policy opportunity. Because HB 4134 is funded by an increase in the transient lodging tax, a majority of the funding will not come from Oregon residents. Outdoor recreation is a \$16 billion industry in Oregon. We can keep that industry growing and thriving by investing in the wildlife and natural spaces that attract visitors, all while still keeping Oregon's statewide lodging tax one of the lowest in the nation.

HB 4134 protects our fish, wildlife, and way of life. This legislation protects wildlife and human health. It will also prevent endangered species conflicts. Some highlights:

- * Oregon's Department of Fish and Wildlife lacks stable funding, especially for non-game species. HB 4134 changes that, addressing an issue that is plaguing state wildlife agencies across the country.

- * The health of people and our environment is inextricably linked. Keeping nature healthy keeps people healthy. Projects funded by this legislation will help protect and clean drinking water, support wild pollinators that are essential to our food and natural systems, and maintain species like bats that help control insect populations. These investments aren't just an investment in our environment; they're an investment in community health.

- * Oregon has a list of over 300 vulnerable species that require intervention. HB 4134 invests in conserving and restoring the habitat these species rely upon, while also supporting Oregonians' livelihoods, outdoor recreation, and quality of life. Communities in Oregon, especially our rural communities like Joseph, our hometown, rely on thriving, healthy environments that support our native wildlife.

- * Recovering a species once it is imperiled enough to warrant listing under the state and federal Endangered Species Act is costly and can create a lot of conflict. By investing in proactive conservation, HB 4134 can avoid costly emergency intervention and conflicts down the road. It is an effective and fiscally responsible policy that will help wildlife and communities now and in the future.

Voting for HB 4134 is a win-win: it will not raise costs for residents, while doing a great deal of good. Thanks for giving our recommendation your most serious and thoughtful consideration, and for your service in the Oregon Senate..