

Dear Senators:

I urge your support for HB 4134, 1.25% for Wildlife - legislation that would raise Oregon's statewide Transient Lodging Tax (TLT) from 1.5% to 2.75% and dedicate the additional revenue to support critical habitat for fish and wildlife recovery and protection across the state.

Oregon has some of the most diverse and abundant natural resources in the country, and for this reason numerous visitors are attracted to our state. In particular, in my home here on the south coast, we have year around visitors. They come to celebrate the beauty and enjoy the culture and assets of the rural coast. I am so proud that the visionary leaders of the state set the stage for preservation of public access on the beaches nearly 60 years ago with the Oregon Beach Bill. There are few boundaries that prohibit our citizens and guests from interacting directly with the bounty of our natural coastal resources.

Throughout my career as an aquatic scientist and researcher I have been engaged in numerous fish and wildlife habitat restoration and mitigation studies. The staff of the state, local and federal managers and scientists that work to manage and study fish and wildlife resources are among the best in the world. However, their challenges are growing with increased use and visitations. They need help to manage these assets.

This legislation has broad support from across the state. It will provide funding needed for the Wildlife Action Plan and provide support to the Department of Agriculture for multi-agency collaborations that address risks of invasive species introductions and also fund important rapid response tools. It will provide support for important programs that protect as well as educate the public with stewardship programs that communicate the risks for our native species and importance of Oregon's wildlife and habitats. These programs that are key to boots on the ground citizens that are prepared to help and share information.

It makes sense to use the visitor tax for this effort. This bill is appropriately placed within the visitors' tax system and should be marketed to our visitors and to the industry that supports tourism as a positive thing. This additional funding will help protect enjoy the beauty and unique recreational and historic assets of our precious state. A modest increase in the lodging tax is a practical, responsible way to ensure Oregon's investment in its natural resources meets the scale of today's challenges, and those ahead.

Please make passage of HB 4134 (1.25% for Wildlife) a priority for passage in the 2026 session. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely

Christine M. Moffitt, PhD

Fellow: American Fisheries Society; AAAS. Member, Sea Grant Advisory Board. Member, Western Regional Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species. Former member of OR Invasive Species Council.