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SOCAN Comments supporting HB4134

Chair Broadman and members of the Senate Committee on Finance ad Revenue:

I write as a cofacilitator of Southern Oregon Climate Action Now (SOCAN). We are the oldest grassroots climate organization in the Rogue Valley and represent some 2,000 Southern Oregonians who are concerned about the climate crisis and seek federal, state and local action to address it. We are rural and coastal Southern Oregonians who live on the frontlines of the warming, reducing snowpack, heatwaves, drought, rising sea level and the increasing wildfire risk that these trends conspire to impose on us. Because of our concern, we pay close attention to efforts nationally, statewide, and locally that impact our collective efforts to address the climate crisis. As our logo above indicates, the focus of SOCAN is to promote action through science while encouraging that this be undertaken through a social justice lens.

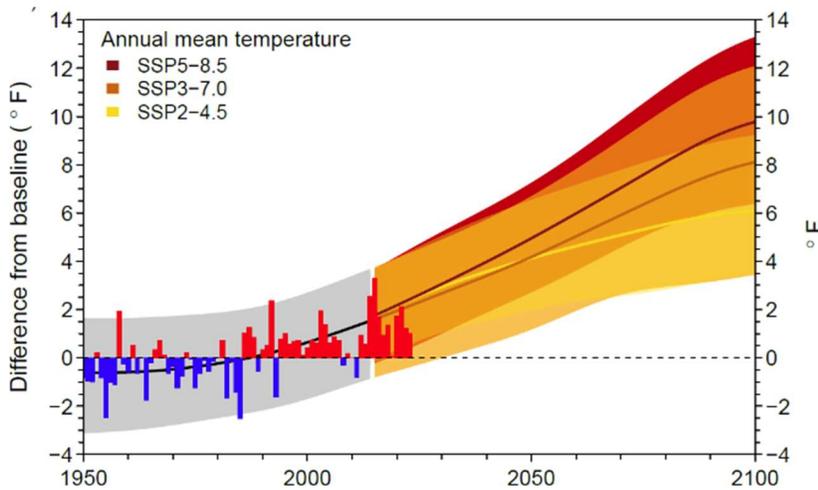


Figure 1. Temperature projection in Oregon to 2100, (Fleishman 2025)

As UNEP (undated) states: “The natural world is the centre of life on Earth. Ecosystems – from forests, grasslands and peat bogs to oceans, rivers, savannahs and mountains – provide a vast range of services vital to the survival of humanity. They provide food and fresh water, protect us from disasters and disease, prop up the global economy, and crucially play a central role in tackling the climate crisis.”

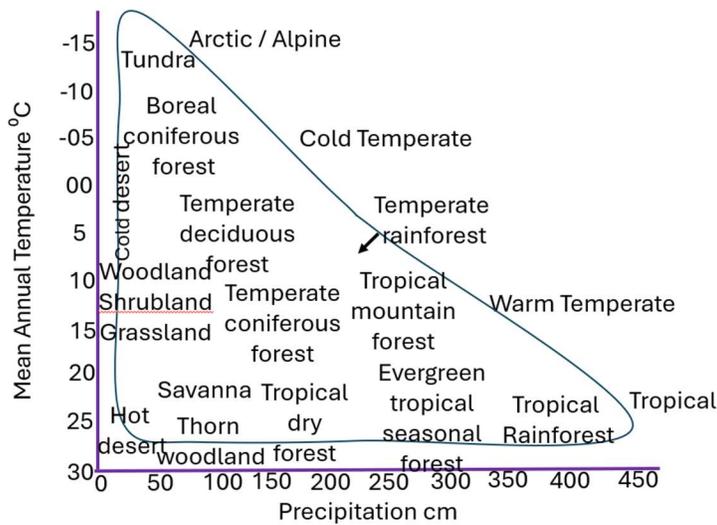


Figure 2. The distribution of global natural ecosystems in relation to mean annual temperature and precipitation. (modified by Alan Journet from Whittaker 1975)

The report continues:
 “Nature helps both mitigate against and adapt to the worst effects of the climate crisis.”

It is critical, therefore, that we do whatever we can to protect our essential natural ecosystem.

To see how successful we are in this venture, it is worth comparing the projected future temperature of Oregon (Figure 1) with the climatic factors that determine the

distribution of natural ecosystems across the planet (Figure 2).

Figure 1 depicts the projected temperature rise by the end of the century in Oregon compared to a 1950 – 2014 baseline. As can be seen, the Shared Socioeconomic Pathway 5-85, initially identified as the ‘worst case scenario’ but now frequently dubbed the ‘business as usual’ scenario because we seem to be following it, suggests a possible temperature increase of 13°F. Meanwhile, Figure 2, depicting how temperature determines the distribution of natural ecosystems, indicates that a temperature shift of as few as a couple of degrees Celsius (about 1.8°F) can render a location unable climatically to support the natural ecosystem that is currently present. If we translate this in terms of Oregon’s natural ecosystems, we can see they are all threatened. This means it is incumbent upon us to do whatever we can to protect these ecosystems and the biodiversity that they comprise. Fortunately, we do not have to follow the SSP585 trajectory; we can adjust our behavior and follow a much less severe trajectory, or, indeed, overcome global warming altogether.

Meanwhile TNC (2025) reported on research illustrating “the impact of ... mitigation strategies on over 14,000 species, from creatures smaller than a mouse to larger than a moose.”

Begum (2021, 2023) reported that the five historical mass extinctions prior to today’s sixth mass extinction, were caused by extreme temperature changes, rising/falling sea levels or one-off events such as huge volcanic eruptions or an asteroid colliding with Earth. The author continues by reporting that we are currently experiencing a rate of extinction that is 100 to 1,000 times above the pre-human background rate of 0.1 to 1 species per 10,000 years per century. Resisting this sixth extinction requires that we invest in efforts to conserve our natural

ecosystems and their inhabitants. That extreme temperature is among these causes should give us pause.

The message is that conserving biodiversity (wildlife) is critical both to protecting our natural ecosystems and addressing the climate crisis. It would be absurd simply to charge state agencies with an unfunded mandate of conserving biodiversity while declining to provide any funds to achieve this goal. HB4234 identifies a range of worthwhile activities including resisting invasive species invasion and wildlife poaching, and promoting wolf management, wildlife stewardship, and wildlife habitat connectivity. The bill also identifies, as a reasonable source for those funds, a small increase in the short-term lodging tax. Those opposing this measure should provide an alternative mechanism for raising funds. OR will still have the 3rd lowest transient lodging tax rate even with this increase.

It is worth noting that even with this increase, Oregon would still have the 3rd lowest statewide tourism tax in the country. For these reasons Southern Oregon Climate Action Now urges passage of HB4134.

Respectfully Submitted



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