



**Re: Support of HB 4134 – 1.25% for Wildlife**

February 25, 2026

Chair Broadman and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sally Compton, and I am the Executive Director of Think Wild, a nonprofit wildlife hospital based in Bend. I write in strong support of HB 4134 1.25% for Wildlife.

Bend is one of Oregon's most popular tourist destinations because of its wildlife, rivers, forests, and outdoor recreation. But we also see the impacts of that popularity. Think Wild serves nearly all of Central and Eastern Oregon, caring for almost 1,000 injured and orphaned native animals each year and responding to more than 4,000 wildlife hotline calls. Approximately 500 of those calls are related to deer struck by vehicles. Our busiest season is summer, when tourism peaks. Increased traffic and recreation directly lead to more wildlife injuries and conflict, and rehabilitation centers like ours absorb that burden almost entirely through private donations.

There has been concern that a modest 1.25% increase in the transient lodging tax could reduce tourism. Even with this increase, Oregon would remain among the lowest lodging tax states in the country. What truly reduces tourism is degraded natural resources: wildfire-damaged landscapes, declining fish and wildlife populations, and neglected parks and habitats. Visitors come to Oregon for healthy ecosystems. Without investment, those assets decline.

HB 4134 creates a practical and fair solution by allowing tourism to reinvest in the natural resources that sustain our recreation economy. Nearly two-thirds of overnight stays are from out-of-state visitors, making this a sustainable funding source that does not increase the cost of living for Oregonians.

Importantly, this bill establishes dedicated funding for wildlife stewardship and rehabilitation across the state and supports proactive solutions such as wildlife corridors that reduce vehicle strikes and habitat investments that lower wildfire risk. I also serve on the Deschutes County Wolf Depredation Committee, where we work with ranchers on preemptive coexistence strategies. Investments like this reduce conflict before it occurs.



Oregon has identified more than 300 species in decline. Without sustainable funding, we risk acknowledging the problem without acting on it, while tourism continues to benefit from the wildlife and landscapes under strain.

HB 4134 is about public safety, responsible stewardship, and ensuring that the wildlife and habitats that make Oregon a destination are supported in return.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Sally Compton  
Executive Director  
Think Wild