

February 25, 2026

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

My name is Lee Kersh and I live in Eugene, Oregon. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 4134 to increase the state lodging tax by 1.25% and help recover Oregon's most vulnerable wildlife and habitats.

I was born in Eugene in 1956 and have seen the devastation of the kelp forests along our coastline first hand. As a young person, I used to play on the beaches and was always happy to see the washed up bull kelp to sling around to torment my brothers and sisters with!

Now...this experience is almost non-existent for my grandchildren.

Little did I know then that the ecosystems underwater depended on a very delicate balance. The need to replace keystone species like the sea otter is critical to bringing back a thriving underwater forest. It is no different...and perhaps more important...than the sustainability efforts Oregon has dedicated to our land based forests.

Let's make a change for our kids and their kids. Oregon is an incredibly special place, and our state's identity is deeply tied to its rich natural heritage, including native fish, wildlife, and the habitats that sustain them. We cannot have this for our future generations without healthy, abundant sea and land based wildlife, and habitats. This legislation helps ensure both. We must step up!

This is a once-in-a generation opportunity to safeguard our natural legacy. Please vote YES on HB 4134.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Lee A. Kersh', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

*Lee A. Kersh
Oregon native and Architect Emeritus*