

Submitter: Erich Reeder

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4134

Hello Chair Broadman & members of the Senate Committee On Finance & Revenue,

My name is Erich Reeder and I live in Medford, Oregon. I am writing today in strong support of House Bill 4134 (HB4134), the "1.25% for Wildlife" bill currently before the Oregon legislature. As a native Oregonian of 59 years, I have a deep and abiding appreciation of the wildlife and wildlife habitats of our great state. The magnificent ecological communities living from our deserts and mountains to our valleys and coast are integral and fascinating members of our natural landscapes, a cherished part of our heritage, and magnet to tourism. Unfortunately, because of the history of our North American model for conservation, funding for programs to help with the monitoring and conservation of wildlife species is lacking for all but those species recognized as "game" animals.

Just the other day, I saw three river otters swimming and foraging in Bear Creek in Medford, Oregon, along with evidence of recent beaver activity. And peregrine falcons, bald eagles, ospreys, brown pelicans, western grebes, great blue herons, and many other magnificent species nearly extinct in Oregon 40 years ago, can now regularly be seen after DDT was regulated, our polluted lakes, rivers, and estuaries were cleaned up, and populations recovered. But new threats emerge every year and if no one is paying attention, all kinds of mayhem and loss of life, including the extinction of species and a contaminated environment for all, can quickly happen unnoticed. Simply put, monitoring and caring for the health of wildlife populations is not only good for them, but it informs us about the health of our shared environment, which is critical information for our communities in Oregon to have during our ongoing time of rapid development and climate change.

My friend Jim, who just had his 80th birthday, has been the only person consistently monitoring bald eagles, golden eagles, and peregrine falcons in all of southwestern Oregon, including the central and southern coast. He's an unpaid volunteer and no one else is keeping track of these magnificent species in case they begin to have trouble again. I also have friends who work for the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW) and the Oregon Department of State Lands (DSL), as well as the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and they all recognize that there are huge gaps in our current understanding of the status of non-game wildlife species throughout Oregon, whether mammal, bird, amphibian, reptile, fish, or insect (e.g. bees & butterflies!).

This bill will go a long way toward fixing this neglect and filling the current information

gap. Among other important benefits including wildlife rehabilitation and wildlife education programs, anti-poaching and invasive species management, this bill will provide dedicated annual funding for ODFW and the Oregon Conservation & Recreation fund to monitor important and targeted non-game wildlife species, inform Oregonians, and take conservation measures as needed. These wonderful species which live among us deserve our attention and our care so they may continue to remain with us.

Thus, I urge you to please support and pass House Bill 4134 (HB4134), the “1.25% for Wildlife” bill currently before the Oregon legislature. It’s good for Oregon wildlife, it’s good for Oregonians, and it’s good for all those who visit to enjoy our Pacific Wonderland.

Thank you,
Erich Reeder
Medford, Oregon