

Submitter: Charles Walker

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4134

My name is Charles Robert Walker and I live in Portland, OR, and I am writing in strong support of HB 4134 with the -1 amendment to increase the state lodging tax by 1.25% and help recover Oregon's most vulnerable fish, wildlife, and habitats. Our native fish, wildlife, and diverse habitats—including the high desert and sagebrush steppe—are central to what makes Oregon special and to why people choose to live, visit, and recreate here. I am proud of Oregon's natural heritage and care deeply about protecting it for future generations. I support dedicated funding to recover vulnerable fish, wildlife, and habitats. This bill would secure sustainable funding to recover Oregon's most at-risk species and habitats, including sagebrush ecosystems, connected wildlife corridors, and resilient landscapes that support biodiversity statewide. Oregon's outdoor recreation and tourism economy depends on healthy lands and waters. The outdoor economy contributes 2.6% of Oregon's GDP, supports 192,000 jobs, and generates \$16 billion in consumer spending. We cannot have a strong tourism economy without healthy ecosystems. Protecting fish, wildlife, and habitats is not separate from economic vitality—it is foundational to it. Investing in conservation now supports local communities and long-term economic resilience. State leadership is especially important right now. As federal funding and protections for wildlife and habitats are reduced, Oregon has an opportunity—and a responsibility—to step forward and invest in its natural legacy. HB 4134 would make Oregon a national leader. By passing this bill, Oregon can set an example for how states can proactively protect biodiversity, reduce wildfire risk, support wildlife stewardship, and sustain healthy ecosystems.

I am a former employee of NASA where I worked on the Skylab program on the Earth Resources Experiment Package, the US Forest Service in Oregon and New Mexico. Also for the BLM in New Mexico and Oregon. I worked in desert and forest ecosystems and believe protecting natural habitats for present and future generations is essential and a responsibility of ours. I urge you to support this bill.