

NATIONAL COAST TRAIL ASSOCIATION

“Keeping the Coast for Everyone!”

February 25, 2026

Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue. Salem, Oregon

RE: Support HB 4134A - “1.25% for Wildlife”

Chair Broadman, Vice-chair McLane and Members of the Committee:

The National Coast Trail Association **strongly supports HB 4134** as now amended. Our organization is focused on completing and protecting the 400-plus-mile hiking trail along the entire Oregon coast. The Oregon Coast Trail offers everyone an opportunity to connect, not only within oneself, but also with the diversity of life discovered. And wildlife are an important part of the experience.



**OREGON
COAST TRAIL**

Urgent Need for Wildlife Protection HB 4134 delivers stable funding to safeguard wildlife habitats, directly enhancing the Oregon Coast Trail's world-class recreational appeal. The trail corridor serves as vital wildlife connectivity, allowing species to migrate, forage, and thrive amid mounting threats like habitat loss and fragmentation. Without these protections, both hikers' immersive experiences and wildlife survival hang in the balance.

Trail Experience Enhanced by Wildlife Wildlife viewing draws 20–25% of Oregon's visitors, fueling over \$16 billion in annual outdoor recreation revenue, with the Oregon Coast Trail as a prime draw. Healthy populations of sea birds, elk, salmon, and coastal species create unforgettable encounters that define a premium trail experience visitors travel worldwide to enjoy. HB 4134's \$30 million yearly investment restores habitats and controls invasives, ensuring the trail remains a global benchmark for nature-rich hiking.

Habitat and Corridor Connectivity The trail corridor itself could potentially function as a critical wildlife linkage, countering isolation from development and roads—major extinction drivers for nearly 300 at-risk Oregon species. Protecting this corridor through targeted restoration, anti-poaching, and connectivity projects lets wildlife roam freely, bolstering populations while enriching hiker sightings of dynamic ecosystems. General Fund shortfalls have long neglected these needs; HB 4134 provides dedicated, accountable resources no local effort can match alone.

Economic and Competitive Strength Independent studies confirm a minimal lodging tax increase has negligible impact on tourism or events, as destination quality overrides minor rate differences. High-tax coastal cities like Seattle still host major gatherings, drawn by natural assets HB 4134 preserves—reinforcing rural economies reliant on trail visitors. Reinvesting lodging revenue aligns perfectly with tourism's core mission, amplifying Oregon's allure without diverting promotion funds.

Broad Coalition and Visitor Stewardship Conservationists, recreation advocates, and others unite behind HB 4134, recognizing visitors' role in sustaining the wildlife they cherish. This modest assessment fairly supports statewide habitat work that elevates Oregon's entire trail network. Every dollar ties to measurable outcomes, ensuring transparency and impact.

We urge your strong support for HB 4134 as now amended, on behalf of countless trail users, the people of Oregon and the wildlife that cannot speak for themselves and wildlife dependents. This bill helps to secure a thriving future where world-class trails and wildlife coexist for generations to come.

Respectfully . . . and in kinship with wildlife!

Albert LePage, Executive Director