

Submitter: Emily Paciotta  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4134

Hello,

I am a wildlife biologist who has been living in the City of Beaverton since 2021. I have worked across the state of Oregon, serving as a contractor supporting Oregon Department of Forestry's timber management initiatives, as well as working in Crater Lake National Park, Oregon's only designated National Park. I have also contributed to citizen science projects across the Portland metro including conducting surveys for breeding salmon species, beavers, and amphibian egg masses in City of Gresham stormwater ponds, as well as organizing surveys for rare subspecies of red fox at Mount Hood. I also spend time volunteering with Washington County's local National Wildlife Refuge, leading citizen science teams for bird count events, roving trails, and participating in public outreach events.

Across my experience working and volunteering in support of Oregon's natural resources, I have fostered an immense appreciation for the wide array of habitat our state holds as well as the abundance of flora and fauna that call Oregon home. I grew up on the east coast, where there is very little public land for recreation compared to the Pacific Northwest. With the amount of tourism we receive, particularly during the summer season, a small increase in tax for these tourists could make a huge impact on our wildlife and landscapes.

With the current uncertainties in federal land management, I urge the Senate Committee to advocate on the state level for our natural resources. The wildlife and landscapes of Oregon serve many benefits for a variety of stakeholders. Tourists and locals alike appreciate being able to view our wildlife. Wildlife species in Oregon also serve as indicators of environmental health, which we can use to draw implications for human health impacts in response to our changing climate, increasing wildfires, etc. Because this tax would not be placed on residents, it allows the state to allocate funds from local taxpayers to other pressing issues without creating financial stress.

Wildlife scientists have seen increasingly decreasing numbers of sensitive wildlife species, especially with increasing wildlife disease spread such as avian influenza, chytrid fungus in amphibians, and white-nose syndrome in bats. As a biologist that focuses on bird conservation, I can attest that Oregon's local keystone bird species help further our timber production, aid in insect control, and more.

Oregon is home to a wide breadth of organizations that are beyond dedicated to wildlife research and conservation, whether it be through our federal, state, and city

governments or through nonprofit organizations. If this initiative passes, the funds allocated for wildlife protection would make a massive difference to these organizations, especially to local nonprofits.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony and for considering protecting local wildlife. I hope that the Senate Committee is able to agree that this initiative is in the best interest of both the wildlife species and Oregonians as a whole.

Best,

Emily Paciotta