

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

I am a 79-year-old Oregonian living in Newberg the last 2+ years after living in Corvallis, Gold Beach, Portland, and Newport the previous 55+ years. I've spent all of these years enjoying the wild flora and fauna of this state while hiking, river running, fishing, hunting, camping, photographing, biking, driving, flying and just soaking in the beauty of all the wild plants and animals of Oregon's natural habitats. It is our native fish, wildlife, and diverse habitats that are central to what makes Oregon special and why I moved here in 1970, and why other people choose to live, visit, and recreate here. I think that passage of HB 4134 is essential to sustaining all of that for present and future generations of Oregonians and any who would come from around the nation and the world to enjoy it. This bill is important to sustaining the State's economy.

HB 4134, the "1.25% for Wildlife", is a bill that would create a dedicated, long-term funding source to protect and restore imperiled fish, wildlife, and habitats across the state using a modest increase in the state transient lodging tax. I came to Oregon to experience the beauty of the fish, wildlife, and their habitats decades ago, and people are still attracted to visit and pay for lodging to enjoy it, even though some of it is in decline. Currently, Oregon's State Wildlife Action Plan identifies more than 300 species of highest conservation need. This decline can be slowed and reversed through passage and implementation of this legislation.

HB 4134 would secure a sustainable source of funding to recover Oregon's most at-risk species and habitats, wildlife corridors, and resilient landscapes that sustain the wide diversity of native species around our beautiful state. I hope you agree with me that healthy wildlife and habitats have been, and should continue to be, essential to Oregon's economy. Our state's outdoor recreation and tourism economy depends on healthy lands and waters. I understand, and hope that you do also, that the outdoor economy contributes 2.6% of Oregon's GDP, supports 192,000 jobs, and generates \$16 billion in consumer spending. Therefore, 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.

Your leadership is especially important right now. As federal funding and protections for wildlife and habitats have been recently reduced, Oregon lawmakers have an opportunity—and a responsibility—to step forward and invest in our State's natural legacy. For your children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and beyond, I strongly encourage you to vote in favor of this excellent legislation.

Barry P. McPherson