

Submitter: Betsy Glenn

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4134

HB 4134 is a bold, proactive solution to directly help at-risk species. Increasing Oregon's state transient lodging tax would provide a sustainable source of funds to ODFW to recover

Oregon's most imperiled species and habitat and enhance biodiversity - all of which contribute to Oregon's tourism and outdoor recreation economy. Raising the statewide TLT by 1.25% to 2.75% will empower ODFW to do its work and restore and recover Oregon's environment throughout the state. And the rise in the TLT will not change our low comparative national ranking - presently we tax our visitors at the 3rd lowest rate nationally, and after the 1.25% increase, our state ranking will remain 3rd lowest in the country.

Our businesses depend on visitors who come to Oregon for the unique natural landscapes and outdoor recreation opportunities. I therefore encourage you to support investing statewide transient lodging tax revenue to protect and enhance Oregon's precious natural heritage and ensure millions of visitors come to Oregon today and into the future.

Hunters, anglers, birders, hikers, campers, outdoor recreationists, and wildlife watchers have created a robust outdoor recreation economy that depends on healthy wildlife, fish populations, and landscapes. These visitors, 65% of whom are from out of state, come to Oregon to experience the great outdoors and stay at our hotels and motels, eat at our restaurants and diners, and patronize our shops and stores. And many more businesses select Oregon as a destination for their industry conference or company meeting for these same reasons - close access to everything Oregon has to offer, and the data bears this out. In 2021, an analysis commissioned by Travel Oregon, the Office of Outdoor Recreation, and ODFW found that our outdoor economy contributed \$15.6 billion in total consumer spending in 2019, equaling 6% of Oregon's economy, supporting 224,000 full and part-time jobs in Oregon, constituting 8.6% of all state employment, with \$9.3 billion in wages and other compensation. For something so crucial to Oregon's economy and way of life, careful reinvestment is required.

Oregon is fortunate to have a diverse and bountiful array of plants and animals, and habitats that support them. Unfortunately, many species face increasing challenges, putting their future at risk. In the draft 2025 SWAP, ODFW identified at least 300 at-risk species with small or declining populations and 11 native habitats needing proactive restoration. With direct and targeted interventions, we can reverse the downward spiral of decline and possible extinction of these species and their

habitats. Unfortunately, current funds available for implementing the SWAP are only a small fraction of what is required to recover our state's most at-risk fish, wildlife, and habitat, and federal funding was insufficient and is now gone. This troubling environmental decline also poses a threat to Oregon's vibrant outdoor economy and the thousands of Oregonians whose livelihoods depend on it.