



SEABIRD
INSTITUTE

Chair Broadman, Vice-Chair McLane, and Members of the Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue,

My name is Katherine Luscher, and I'm both an Oregonian and a Conservation Coordinator for Tufted Puffin recovery for National Audubon Society's Seabird Institute. Audubon's Seabird Institute advances hemispheric seabird conservation through science-based restoration, habitat management, policy leadership, and education to protect vulnerable species like puffins. In Oregon, we collaborate on seabird conservation activities with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bird Alliance of Oregon, Friends of Haystack Rock, and many other local partners. On behalf of our thousands of members in Oregon we urge you to please support passage of HB 4134 - "1.25 % for wildlife".

People from all over the country, and in fact, all over the world come to the Oregon coast to see our Tufted Puffins. In fact, Haystack Rock near Cannon Beach is one of the easiest places in the entire Northwest to see Tufted Puffins. Last summer, as I was monitoring the Tufted Puffin population at Haystack Rock in Cannon Beach, many of the people I talked to had traveled from other states and countries specifically to come to our coast - and being able to see our iconic seabird - the Tufted Puffin - was a big part of the draw. These visitors are contributing to the coastal economy by staying in hotels, enjoying delicious Oregon seafood and spending money on all our great coast has to offer.

However, there's a problem. Oregon's Tufted Puffin population is declining dramatically. The population has plummeted from an estimated 5,000 birds in the 1990s to only about 500 today. And while there is now a coordinated effort in-place to - hopefully - stop the decline - we need more support. Passing 1.25% for wildlife would give us a fighting chance and the needed resources to help this species make a comeback and, in turn, ensure people keep coming to the coast to support the local coastal economy and enjoy Oregon's amazing wildlife, habitats, and outdoor recreational activities.

We cannot have a thriving tourism economy without healthy and abundant fish, wildlife, and the habitats that support them. This legislation would ensure we have both. At a time when the federal government support for the state budget is waning, Oregon has a chance to set an example and protect our natural heritage.

Please support HB 4134! Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Katherine Luscher

*National Audubon Society - Seabird Institute
Conservation Coordinator, Tufted Puffins
Portland, OR*