

Submitter: Lindsey Hutchison
On Behalf Of: Willamette Riverkeeper
Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4134

My name is Lindsey Hutchison, and I am Willamette Riverkeeper's Staff Attorney. I am speaking today in support of HB 4134. Willamette Riverkeeper works to protect and restore the Willamette River and its tributaries through restoration work, public outreach and education, and advocacy.

Our outreach includes multi-day events, such as Paddle Oregon and the Pinot Paddle, which connect people directly with the river and raise awareness of its history, beauty, challenges, and the work we do to protect it. One piece of our work—and one we educate about and invite people to participate in is removing aquatic invasive plants such as Ludwigia, which outcompete native plants like Wapato, which we actively reintroduce to help restore river health. These events often attract out-of-state participants who have heard about Oregon's natural beauty and the unique plants and wildlife that make the state special. These visitors would not come to Oregon without healthy rivers and intact natural areas.

To continue protecting and restoring these resources, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife needs a stable, sustainable funding source. HB 4134 provides that support.

Across the state, more wildlife is becoming imperiled while natural areas face increasing pressure and loss. HB 4134 is a proactive response to these challenges and helps address growing wildfire risk as fire seasons lengthen and intensify. Restoration efforts strengthen ecosystem health, which in turn reduces wildfire severity. HB 4134 ensures that the Oregon Conservation Corps receives funding to further wildfire risk reduction and community resilience.

HB 4134 will not discourage tourism or the use of short-term rentals. On the contrary, it will help ensure that people continue to visit Oregon to experience our remarkable rivers, landscapes, and wildlife.

Thank you for your time and consideration.