

Chair Broadman and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of MCAT and support HB 4134.

This effort should be supported by Ranchers as the funds raised by the tax will go directly to wolf depredation programs such as remuneration and fencing, protecting fish, wildlife, and habitat recovery efforts and invasive species control and technical assistance.

It is supported by farmers for stewardship programs collaborating with farms helping habitat recovery by restoring and managing land in ways that increase native vegetation, improve water quality, and create corridors and refuges for wildlife. Practices like riparian buffers, cover crops, native grassland restoration, and targeted easements both boost biodiversity and often improve farm resilience and productivity in rural places.

Similarly, this bill improves our fisheries and coastal communities by improving wetlands and streams for anadromous fish and water filtration.

Farmers and ranchers could access these programs through ODFW and partner conservation groups.

Why this funding source? 65% of the taxes raised come from out-of-state tourists. We want to keep the tourists coming to visit all parts of our state and supporting our tourism economy which jumped markedly during COVID.

Economic Impact: Even with this increase, Oregon would still have the 3rd lowest statewide tourism tax in the country. It also increases jobs and much higher rate than the Governor's bill. \$1 million investment creates 15-24 jobs.

How will the bill channel money to help farmers and ranchers?

Dedicated funding for **State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP)**: supports habitat projects that often overlap with working lands (riparian restoration, stream bank stabilization, wetland enhancement, enhance forage) and can include cost-share for on-farm conservation with Stewardship payments.

Wildlife Stewardship and Connectivity programs: Fund projects that reduce human-wildlife conflict (wildlife crossings, habitat corridors) and can pay landowners for easements or stewardship actions on private lands.

Wolf depredation compensation and financial assistance: Creates a more reliable fund to reimburse livestock losses and fund nonlethal deterrents (fladry, guardian animals, fencing). This reduces economic risk for ranchers by protecting livestock.

Invasive species response and habitat recovery grants:

Help farmers and local communities control weeds that harm forage and water quality and restore native vegetation that supports pollinators and fisheries. This can reduce management costs over time and improve pasture productivity as well as building new sites of coastal recreation.

Please consider the help and support for coastal communities, ranchers and farmers in your district when you decide your vote.

Warm regards,

Catherine Thomasson

MCAT

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