

February 26, 2026

Dear Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue,

I am urging you to vote yes on the 1.25% for Wildlife bill (HB 4134). This would be a monumental bill to protect and recover Oregon's threatened wildlife and their habitats.

We are incredibly lucky to live in a beautiful state rich in diverse ecoregions and species, but too many of Oregon's wildlife species are threatened by loss of habitat, imbalanced ecosystems, introduced species, pollution, climate change, overexploitation, and more. I don't want to live in an Oregon where I don't see Gray whales diving offshore, or spot Western snowy plovers running across our beaches, or hear Marbled murrelets calling from high in the forest canopy. I don't think that future generations of Oregonians or the millions of people who visit Oregon annually do either.

This bill would benefit local Oregonians, Oregon's economy, and visitors by helping to ensure that we have healthy ecosystems rich in the species that we all love to see. A major reason why people flock to Oregon is for a chance to see our state's incredible wildlife. They pour their money into whale watching tours in Depoe Bay, birding excursions, and hunting and fishing trips throughout the state.

Unfortunately, adequate funding for wildlife conservation is scarce and perpetually limited. Profit and the capitalistic economy are *repeatedly* chosen over protecting our state's forests, wetlands, grasslands, rocky habitats, sandy beaches, and the hundreds of species that we share this land with. We are rapidly approaching a future where we don't have healthy, functioning ecosystems and significantly fewer species living there, but we still have the power to change that!

Please don't pass on this opportunity to provide a critical funding source to the grossly underfunded ODFW to make important conservation work happen.

Wildlife cannot advocate for themselves, so they need people to give them a voice and make decisions that allow them to thrive. Through this bill, visitors and Oregonians alike can be proud to support wildlife through this modest lodging tax increase. With the right messaging, this could give people an INCENTIVE to get out and book a stay in Oregon. "Help support Gray whales by booking a hotel in Depoe Bay!" "Your lodging tax dollars are directly helping Oregon's wildlife!" I think people would be PROUD to see lodging tax go to support wildlife conservation. Please don't fear away from Oregon becoming a national leader in statewide wildlife conservation.

Warm regards,

Cara Gates  
Resident of Pacific City, Oregon