

Submitter: S. Eleni Kondilis
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4134

Chair Broadman and members of the Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue,

My name is Eleni and I live in Portland, Oregon. I am submitting this testimony in strong support of HB 4134 to increase the state lodging tax by 1.25% and help recover Oregon's most vulnerable fish, wildlife, and habitats.

Securing long-term dedicated funding for wildlife and habitats protection is strongly supported by a majority of Oregonians. The funding would not only help wildlife and habitats, but also support local communities and businesses that rely on tourism dollars. Oregon's robust outdoor tourism economy supports nearly 200,000 jobs and brings in \$16 billion in consumer spending. Investing in these resources now will continue to generate more economic opportunities for Oregon's communities in the future.

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 is slashing funds and dismantling policies that protect our vulnerable fish and wildlife and their habitats, Oregon has a chance to set an example and protect our natural heritage. Doing so would make Oregon a national leader.

Many of our species, even those seen regularly in their range, are at risk due to habitat loss. For the protection of the Western-Screech Owl as much as the Northern Spotted Owl, the Blinded Sphinx as much as the Western Meadowlark, and the Western Red-Cedar and Spirea as much as the Bald Eagle, more funding must go into the protection of natural areas.

Please support "1.25% for Wildlife" by passing HB 4134 today.

Thank you,
Eleni