

Submitter: Ian Isaacson
On Behalf Of: Myself
Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4134
Re: HB 4134

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

For the record, my name is Ian Isaacson. I live in Bend, OR and I'm writing in strong support of HB 4134.

HB 4134 helps fix a long-standing problem in Oregon by creating a reliable, dedicated funding source for fish and wildlife without asking a minority of Oregonians to shoulder the whole load—by making a modest 1.25% adjustment to the statewide transient lodging tax, paid largely by visitors (about two-thirds from out-of-state), while still keeping Oregon among the lowest lodging-tax states in the country. The bill is the product of years of collaboration and bipartisan work, and it's built around clear priorities and measurable outcomes that Oregonians expect when public dollars are on the line. For hunters and anglers—who have proudly carried wildlife conservation for generations through license revenue and excise taxes, even while supporting recent fee increases—this is a fair, transparent, and overdue step toward broadening the funding base to match today's conservation challenges, leverage federal matching dollars, and deliver results on the ground.

I also want to address the arguments being made by some opposing this bill, because they don't pass a basic good-faith test. Opponents have argued that transient lodging tax revenues “yield the greatest benefits for Oregonians when...reinvested in programs designed to stimulate Oregon's economy,” and have suggested that dedicating any portion of these revenues to conservation is not “directing funds back into the system.” With respect, that logic only works if you pretend the natural resources that power Oregon's tourism economy are free, self-sustaining, and don't require active stewardship.

In the real world, Oregon's outdoor economy runs on clean water, healthy habitat, abundant wildlife, and resilient landscapes. These are not just amenities—they are the foundation of the very “Oregon experience” that is marketed and sold every day. If your industry relies on visitors coming here for wild rivers, healthy forests, iconic wildlife, and world-class outdoor recreation, then funding conservation is not a diversion from economic development—it is economic development. It is reinvesting in the underlying assets that make Oregon a destination.

HB 4134 is both sound conservation policy and a prudent investment in the resources that underpin some of the most durable components of Oregon's economic engine. Outdoor recreation contributes billions of dollars annually to Oregon's economy and supports communities across the state. Investing in healthy fish, wildlife, and habitat protects this economic engine while preserving Oregon's natural heritage for future generations.

Thank you for your consideration and for the opportunity to provide testimony. I respectfully urge your support for HB 4134.

Sincerely,
Ian Isaacson