

Submitter: Casey Baker
On Behalf Of: Dossier Hotel
Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4134

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Casey Baker. I serve as the Director of Sales & Marketing at the Dossier Hotel in downtown Portland, and I am here in strong opposition to House Bill 4134.

Let me be clear: I support wildlife conservation. Oregon's natural resources are part of what makes our state special. Habitat restoration, wildlife crossings, invasive species mitigation, and poaching enforcement are worthy priorities.

But the funding mechanism proposed in HB 4134 is misguided and harmful to an industry that has already been rocked for nearly six years.

Since 2020, Portland's hospitality industry has endured:

- National headlines about "riots" and unrest that continue to shape perception long after events subsided
- Waves of negative publicity and mis/disinformation that still impact corporate travel decisions
- Dramatic drops in business travel and convention demand
- Staffing shortages, rising wage pressures, and inflationary operating costs
- Layer upon layer of tax and regulatory increases

We are still rebuilding. Many downtown hotels are not back to pre-2020 performance levels. Corporate RFPs scrutinize total tax load. Event planners compare markets side by side. When they see higher taxes, they move their business elsewhere. It is that simple.

HB 4134 proposes increasing the state transient lodging tax from 1.5% to 2.75%. On paper, 1.25% may seem incremental. In practice, it compounds an already heavy lodging tax structure that in Portland often exceeds 15% when state, local, and tourism assessments are combined.

Visitors are not an unlimited funding source.

Lodging taxes were created to promote and sustain tourism. Redirecting additional lodging tax revenue away from tourism and into unrelated policy areas undermines the foundational agreement that built this system in the first place.

Wildlife conservation benefits all Oregonians. The responsibility to fund it should not fall disproportionately on overnight visitors and the hospitality industry — particularly when that industry is still in recovery mode.

We need a break from policies that continue to increase our cost structure while we are fighting to restore demand and rebuild national confidence in Portland.

If the Legislature believes \$38 million annually is necessary for conservation, then a broader-based funding solution should be considered — one that reflects shared statewide responsibility rather than placing additional burden on one of Oregon's most fragile recovery sectors.

Hospitality is not a bottomless well.

We are employers. We are tax generators. We are economic drivers. And we are still rebuilding.

I respectfully urge the Senate to reject HB 4134 in its current form.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Casey Baker
Director of Sales & Marketing
Dossier Hotel
Portland, Oregon