

Submitter: Sarah Barsch

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4134

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sarah, and I live in Bend, Oregon. I strongly support HB 4134 with the -1 amendment to increase the lodging tax by 1.25% and provide dedicated, long-term funding for Oregon's most vulnerable fish, wildlife, and habitats.

Through my work conducting long-term vegetation monitoring for the National Park Service, I have seen firsthand how vital intact ecosystems are to biodiversity and resilience. When I recreate in healthy sagebrush landscapes, I'm continually inspired by the diversity they sustain — and deeply concerned by how quickly we are losing them. Invasive annual grasses and increasing wildfire risk are accelerating habitat loss at alarming rates.

The decline of sagebrush and other ecosystems affects more than wildlife. These landscapes hold deep cultural significance for Tribal Nations with longstanding stewardship traditions, and they are foundational to rural communities whose livelihoods, recreation, and identities are tied to the land. Protecting habitat is also about sustaining cultural heritage, stewardship values, and community resilience.

This funding is critical not only for sagebrush steppe, but also for Oregon's forests, rivers, wetlands, and coastal habitats. Proactive conservation strengthens biodiversity, reduces wildfire risk, and supports communities statewide.

HB 4134 is a responsible investment in Oregon's natural legacy and future. I urge your support.

Sincerely,  
Sarah  
Bend, Oregon