

Submitter: Emily Meier

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4134

Hello,

My name is Emily Meier, and I am a resident of Portland, Oregon, writing today in strong support of HB 4134 to increase the state lodging tax by 1.25% to help recover Oregon's most vulnerable fish, wildlife, and habitats. Across many regions--urban, suburban, exurban, and rural alike--our identity as a state is deeply tied to our natural areas. Our native fish, wildlife, and diverse habitats—including the high desert and sagebrush steppe—are central to what makes Oregon special and to why people choose to live, visit, and recreate here.

Oregonians value wildlife and want to see it thrive. Many of us are proud of Oregon's natural heritage and care deeply about protecting it both for people here now and for future generations. A strong majority of Oregonians support dedicated funding to recover vulnerable fish, wildlife, and habitats.

HB 4134 provides long-term, dedicated funding for conservation. This bill would secure sustainable funding to recover Oregon's most at-risk species and habitats, including sagebrush ecosystems, connected wildlife corridors, and resilient landscapes that support biodiversity statewide.

Healthy wildlife and habitats are essential to Oregon's economy. Oregon's outdoor recreation and tourism economy depends on healthy lands and waters. The outdoor economy contributes 2.6% of Oregon's GDP, supports 192,000 jobs, and generates \$16 billion in consumer spending. We cannot have a strong tourism economy without healthy ecosystems. Protecting fish, wildlife, and habitats is not separate from economic vitality—it is foundational to it. Investing in conservation now supports local communities and long-term economic resilience.

State leadership is especially important right now. As federal funding and protections for wildlife and habitats are reduced, Oregon must step forward and invest in its natural legacy, setting an important example for how states can proactively protect biodiversity, reduce wildfire risk, support wildlife stewardship, and sustain healthy ecosystems.

While I am originally from the east coast and lived for some time in the midwest, I have called Oregon home for 25 years and plan to live out my life here. Virtually all my vacations are spent backpacking and biking around Oregon and Washington on or adjacent to public lands. These areas are precious to me; they will not exist without conservation efforts. We live in an era of increasing destruction of

ecosystems and decline in biodiversity. All life, including human life, is dependent on this biodiversity whether we know it or not. A modest lodging tax is worth it to sustain these foundational ecosystems and habitats.