

Submitter: Ernest Carter

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4134

My name is Ernest Carter, I am an Oregon resident and live in Milwaukie. I write today to inform you that I support and encourage you to pass House Bill 4134, also known as "1.25% for Wildlife." By dedicating an additional 1.25% in the state lodging tax we create a stable funding source for a sustained effort to support the protection and hopefully recovery of many species identified as most vulnerable in Oregon's State Wildlife Action Plan.

If this bill is passed, I believe this would be the first time we would have a meaningfully large funding source to undertake the longer-term activities needed to stabilize habitat and begin the recovery of the state's most vulnerable fish and other wildlife. While many opportunities are yet to be addressed both west and east of the Cascades, for the moment I'm thinking here are about vast areas east of the cascades. One example, its amazing to watch how habitat restoration can transform creek, stream or river beds in the eastern mountains and high desert from their currently mostly sterile, erosion prone, low water storage capacity condition to their original biodiverse condition where spring runoff is slowed and water storage increases. Human efforts can get the process going and beaver can carry the ball home in a sustainable fashion once they 'make it' their home. This is a proven model for success replicated in many locations across several western states.

We cannot have a strong tourism economy without healthy ecosystems. Protecting fish, wildlife, and habitats is not separate from economic vitality as we all know, but foundational to it. Investing in conservation now supports local communities and future, long-term economic resilience. Tourism is only part of the picture. It's also about caring for our local culture and traditions so parents can pass to their children their interests who can then flourish when they become adults and pass those interests to their children. In so doing we also support our communities through the generations. Indeed, by restoring habitats we will actually restore to families and communities certain activities lost in recent generations.

A month from now I'll be out with a team for a full day north of Bend on the Deschutes removing barbed wire, wire that no longer serves a purpose and only injures wildlife, and two months from now I am volunteering for two full days of work to restore stream habitat on a tributary of the John Day. Unpaid volunteer efforts are important but they only scratch the surface of the work that needs to get done. That's what I'm doing to personally support conservation efforts this spring and you can support these same efforts by passing this bill.

Thank you for taking the time in your busy schedules to read my letter.