

Submitter: Harper Hamblin  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4134

At 18 now, I have lived in Oregon almost my whole life. When I travel, I can't spend more than a few weeks away from my home without missing what has felt natural my whole life. It's when I'm gone that I truly appreciate the small things we take for granted here like our fresh, pure drinking water, the lush forests, the towering trees, and the healthy, abundant wildlife in our own front yards. In Oregon we don't stop to question the deer in our driveways or the newts clambering about the ponds. Our lives depend on the health of our environments— I support HB 4134 because it will preserve these natural gifts in Oregon.

My family does not spend our money lightly. But we support this bill because we know that it is an investment in our surroundings and our futures, without raising the cost of living. Because this bill is mostly funded by lodging taxes, the people investing the most will be gaining from it. They will benefit from the abundance of wildlife that they expect to see in Oregon and the vast amount of outdoor recreational activities that our natural environment supports. Paying the tax will guarantee that Oregon is a destination worth visiting. This tax revenue is an investment to the growing industry of outdoor recreation and tourism here. Every time I immerse myself in Oregon's natural beauty, I feel a sense of stability. But also, I feel a fear that this beauty may fade.

I know I am not alone in this. I have spent multiple days lobbying throughout the last two legislative cycles and seen that this particular issue crosses partisan lines. No matter who I talked to, legislator or constituent, Republican, Democrat, or independent, they understood that our wildlife needs protection. And although raising taxes seems scary at first, people understood that this bill will not make it more expensive to live in Oregon. This bill would help preserve Oregon's beauty by restoring and protecting natural habitats for wildlife. We need our wildlife for our rapidly growing industries of recreation and tourism, to protect endangered species that rarely receive funding, and to protect our clean drinking water and pollination. Rural areas, especially, depend on wildlife to support their lifestyles. Without raising Oregon residents' cost of living, we can help protect this vital part of life across Oregon. Today, I urge you to support this bill and vote YES on HB 4134 to protect Oregon's natural heritage and preserve the harmonious lifestyle we are able to have with our wildlife.