



TINA KOTEK
GOVERNOR

April 7, 2026

The Honorable Tobias Read
Secretary of State
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: House Bill 4134

Dear Secretary Read,

I am pleased to sign House Bill 4134 today, marking a historic step forward for the conservation of Oregon's fish and wildlife. This legislation passed with strong bipartisan, bicameral support and was backed by a broad coalition that includes conservation, hunting, angling, livestock, farming, outdoor recreation organizations, and businesses.

HB 4134 directs revenue from the state's transient lodging tax, now increased by 1.25% to 2.75%, toward programs that support fish and wildlife, recreation and to reduce wildfire risk. Until now, Oregon has never had a dedicated source of funding for conservation of at-risk species and Oregon's natural environment. Historically, the state has funded fish and wildlife management largely through hunting and angling licenses and related revenues. These sources were never intended to meet the broad conservation needs we now face—needs that, together with hunting and angling, help make Oregon an exceptional place to visit, live, and work.

Data from 2022 shows that outdoor recreation in Oregon generated \$16 billion in consumer spending and 192,000 full and part-time jobs in that year alone (*Mackey, E., Cousins, K., 2024. Economic Analysis of Outdoor Recreation in Oregon: 2022 Update. Earth Economics. Tacoma, WA.*). Since 2003, the number of overnight visitors to Oregon has grown by more than one-third, and many of these travelers come here specifically to experience our landscapes and natural heritage. With the passage of HB 4134, these visitors will now contribute to conserving the very places and ecosystems that make Oregon such a special destination, with increased funding going toward:

- Compensation for wolf-caused livestock losses;
- Oregon State Police and Department of Justice enforcement of fish and wildlife laws;
- Invasive species control;
- Wildfire risk reduction and job development;
- Grant programs to support projects that conserve wildlife and create new outdoor opportunities; and
- Wildlife connectivity projects like highway crossings for wildlife.

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I also want to acknowledge concerns some have raised about this legislation's potential negative impact on tourism. Tourism is a major driver of Oregon's economy – supporting more than 120,000 jobs and generating roughly \$14 billion in annual visitor spending, according to recent statewide tourism estimates. Large conventions and destination events alone can bring tens of thousands of visitors and millions of dollars in local spending to host communities. Given these stakes, I remain open to continued conversations with the tourism sector if solutions are needed to ensure Oregon remains competitive in recruiting major events and attracting visitors who support our hotels, restaurants, and small businesses. These concerns deserve thoughtful attention as we implement HB 4134.

At the same time, protecting Oregon's natural lands and wildlife is not separate from economic prosperity – it is foundational to it. Oregon's recreation economy and nearly 200,000 associated jobs depend on health landscapes, clean water, and abundant wildlife. HB 4134 honors the economic and ecological value of Oregon's landscapes, but we must also continue thinking critically about the funding structures that sustain the industries that bring people here. These goals are not in conflict. By investing in conservation while staying attentive to the competitiveness of Oregon's tourism and hospitality sector, we can ensure that both our natural heritage and our economy continue to thrive together for generations to come.

Looking ahead, Oregon's long-term prosperity depends on the health of our fish and wildlife populations and the natural environment that underpins our tourism economy. By directing stable funding, this bill helps ensure that Oregon has resilient natural resources capable of supporting strong communities and a vibrant economy for generations to come.

Sincerely,



Governor Tina Kotek