



**OREGON HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVE**

February 24, 2026 <sup>CR</sup>

Timothy G. Sekerak  
Chief Clerk of the House  
State Capitol Building  
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Vote Explanation on HB 4134 A-Eng

Dear Chief Clerk Sekerak,

Let me begin by saying clearly: I support many of the programs this bill seeks to fund. Efforts such as wolf depredation compensation, wildfire mitigation and prevention, and fish and wildlife protection programs are important priorities for our state. Ranchers deserve support when livestock losses occur. Proactive wildfire mitigation protects lives, property, and forests. Conservation and habitat protection are critical to maintaining Oregon's natural heritage and outdoor economy.

My vote was not about the value of those programs.

However, HB 4134 funds these initiatives through a tax increase that would directly impact Oregonians who are traveling within our state and visitors who are choosing to spend their dollars here. Tourism is a major economic driver, particularly for rural communities that rely on recreation, hospitality, and seasonal travel. Increasing costs on families who want to explore Oregon, and on visitors who support local businesses, risks putting additional strain on an industry that many communities depend on.

Beyond the immediate impact, there is a broader principle at stake. I cannot support establishing the precedent that when the Legislature wants to fund worthwhile programs, the default solution is to raise taxes. If wolf compensation, wildfire mitigation, and fish and wildlife protection are priorities, and I believe they are, then they should be funded through responsible budgeting and prioritization within existing resources.

The Legislature's role is to make difficult budget decisions and ensure core services are funded without continually increasing the tax burden on Oregonians.

My vote was not a vote against ranchers, wildfire prevention, or conservation. It was a vote against placing another tax burden on Oregonians and against normalizing tax increases as the primary funding tool.

We can protect our natural resources, support rural communities, and maintain fiscal responsibility at the same time. I remain committed to working toward solutions that accomplish all three.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Matt Bunch".

Matt Bunch, Representative for Oregon House District 51