



STATEMENT IN OPPOSITION TO SB595

Chair Fagan and honorable members of the Committee, my name is Alana Hughson and I thank you for the opportunity to represent Oregon Destination Marketing Organizations (ODMO) in opposition to SB595.

ODMO is a non-profit association of tourism Destination Marketing Organizations (DMO's), from across Oregon. DMO's are a mix of Visitor Bureau's and Chambers of Commerce; as well as community and regional tourism associations.

In 2018 I accepted the leadership role with ODMO after 25 years as the CEO for the Central Oregon Visitors Association. From 2010-2018 I also served on the Oregon Tourism Commission, having been appointed by Governor Kulongoski to a four-year term, then reappointed by Governor Kitzhaber to a second term. It was my privilege to serve two years as Chair of the Commission from 2016-2018.

More than 112,000 of our fellow Oregonians are also employed in Oregon's tourism industry and I'm grateful that growing up in small, family hospitality business in Bend gave me the foundation to build a career in tourism. I'm passionate about what our industry means to Oregon and I have the unique perspective of having worked in the private sector; with local and regional destination marketing organizations; and with the state tourism division.

I've seen extraordinary change in Oregon tourism over the past three decades and I'm very proud to represent an industry that has grown to be a key economic driver for our state. Tourism is one of Oregon's largest employers; with employment growing 3.2% every year since 2010. Direct travel spending in Oregon was more than \$11.8 billion in 2017.

Continuing that momentum, and the partnerships between private sector tourism businesses, local destination marketing organizations and Travel Oregon, is integral to Oregon's economic health. The industry shares the vision and responsibility to build off-season travel to fill seasonal downtimes. We are committed to leveling the ebb and flow of visitation to create year-round incomes for Oregonians and a stable workforce.

You've seen the success of our tourism partnerships as we've worked together as Oregonians to rebuild awareness and sustainability following Oregon's devastating forest fires. – On the local level, I've seen the success of other creative partnerships between hospitality leaders like Mt. Bachelor and Sunriver Resort.

The HR departments of these private sector leaders have created a job-share referral program so that hospitality professionals working on Mt. Bachelor in the winter are invited to transition seamlessly to destination resort employment in the summer.

These types of impactful, innovative partnerships are designed to create vibrant year-round visitor industry employment. These programs, and countless others statewide, will only continue to develop with your support for a healthy tourism industry.

ODMO opposes SB595 because it redirects resources intended to support the critical mission of Oregon tourism. We cannot afford to put in peril the job creation that is so important to our state.

ODMO opposes legislation that would change the current transient lodging tax allocations. We ask that you ensure resources remain directed to programs that have a demonstrated and measurable impact for Oregon's hospitality workforce and economic vitality.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

Respectfully submitted, to the Senate Committee on Housing 2/18/2019: Alana Hughson, Managing Contractor, Oregon Destination Marketing Organizations: 61470 Tam McArthur Loop, Bend, OR 97702. (541) 480-3339