



March 18, 2019

The Honorable Mark Hass, Chairman
Senate Finance and Revenue Committee
900 Court Street, NE | Oregon State Capitol
Salem, OR

Dear Chairman Hass and Honorable Members of the Committee:

My name is Mark Mattechek, Chairman of the Board, and I thank you for the opportunity to represent the Coos Bay-North Bend Visitor & Convention Bureau (VCB) in opposition to SB595.

In Oregon, Destination Marketing Organizations like the VCB work hard to bring visitors to our local communities during shoulder months (October – May) to ensure employers and employees can keep jobs, pay bills, and stabilize incomes. Travel and tourism are important “export-oriented” industries in Oregon, especially in the Coos Bay area, where the wood products industry has declined so significantly over the past few decades.

Travel and tourism is an essential part of the entire south coast’s economic vitality, especially as we lag significantly behind our neighbors on the Central and North Coast in visitors to our area. In order to compete for the very finite tourism consumer dollar, we must have an adequate budget for advertising to these potential travelers.

Reducing our ability to compete not only hurts our destination as a whole, but it significantly reduces the ability of our hotels to remain occupied during shoulder months. It will also hurt our small businesses who struggle to stay open year-round.

While the majority of TLT funds to the VCB is spent to encourage visitors to choose our destination through marketing and advertising efforts, we also frequently use these funds with local services including local printers, sign makers, graphic designers, photographers, venues, event managers, hotels, transportation services, food producers, restaurants, artists, and guides.

If this bill passes, our use of these local services will be severely reduced, thereby harming local, small businesses in an attempt to fix such a systemic challenge for the state as a whole. Affordable housing is an issue, we concur, but crippling one of the state’s major industries to fix the problem is just creating a whole new problem.

I’ll leave you with this last question. If people who work in the tourism industry don’t have visitors in their local communities in the winter months, how will they remain employed and afford housing in general?

Thank you for the opportunity to present this important position from my community with you today.

Sincerely,

Mark Mattechek
Chairman of the Board
Coos Bay – North Bend Visitor & Convention Bureau