

TRAVEL PORTLAND

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February 3, 2020

Representative Nathanson, Chair
House Committee on Revenue
900 Court St., NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: HB 4047 Support, State Transient Lodging Tax

Dear Chair Nathanson, Vice-Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Reschke, and members of the House Revenue Committee:

On behalf of Travel Portland, the Destination Marketing and Management Organization (DMMO) for the City of Portland, I am writing to urge your support of HB 4047 which would eliminate the sunset on the state transient lodging tax (TLT) rate and maintain the current level of investment in Oregon's tourism industry.

The TLT was established in 2003 to create a dedicated funding source to promote tourism and economic development in the hospitality industry in Oregon. In 2016 the tax was adjusted to 1.8% with a sunset to 1.5% in July 2020.

As the President and CEO of the organization that serves as both a Regional Destination Management Organization (RDMO) and a DMMO I urge you to eliminate the sunset and maintain the statewide TLT at 1.8%. I have detailed the importance of this revenue to the regional program in a separate letter. Within the City of Portland, this revenue supports significant projects and partnerships that grow jobs and increase economic activity for our community.


The state program has supported Travel Portland's ability to drive off-season travel in partnership with the Winter Lights Festival and to nurture multicultural events such as Sneaker Week in keeping with the objectives of our Tourism Master Plan. Additionally, Travel Portland has deployed statewide TLT funds to host a North American media conference, the Society of American Travel Writers (SATW), and the upcoming international sales marketplace, Go West Summit, in Portland. Travel writers experienced the allure of all of Oregon's seven tourism regions through the SATW conference and all regions will be active participants in the significant sales opportunities presented by the Go West Summit in May.

Finally, Travel Oregon grant funds awarded to the Portland Parks Foundation supported the installation of the Barbara Walker Crossing, an artistically inspired footbridge over West Burnside, for users of the Wildwood Trail which is popular with visitors and locals alike.

Without the current state TLT 1.8% rate, these kinds of grant projects and collaborative initiatives will be compromised and programs that leverage these state dollars will be diminished. These investments have supported Travel Portland's efforts to diversify the offerings of our destination and seed opportunities that extend benefits across the state. These investments would not have been possible without the state support through the TLT.

I would be happy to share more details on how our community benefits directly from the TLT and answer any questions you may have as you consider this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Miller". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "J" and "M".

Jeff Miller
President and CEO
Travel Portland