



White Bird Clinic

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

From: Chris Hecht
Executive Coordinator
White Bird Clinic
341 E. 12th Ave
Eugene, OR 97402

Date: February 12, 2020

Re: House Bill 4047

White Bird Clinic is a nonprofit community health center in Eugene that has been helping individuals gain control of their social, emotional and physical well-being for more than 50 years. White Bird provides integrated primary, dental and behavioral health care services to Eugene's underserved populations, including one in four Oregon Health Plan members. More than half of our patients are experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

Communities across Oregon have benefited greatly from tourism. It has also meant that much of our available long-term housing has been converted to short-term rental housing. Short-term rentals have taken housing supply off the market, pushing prices upward. Low income community members are then faced with deciding whether to put food on their table or pay rent.

In this manner, tourism reduces housing availability. That is why we believe that any conversation focused on increasing our state's lodging tax should also include a conversation about using a portion of those funds to address affordable housing development. We as a state can and must do more so that everyone can access safe stable affordable housing.

We hope that the discussion of House Bill 4047 will catalyze a larger conversation about the critical need for transitional and permanent supportive housing which is essential if we are to develop sustainable responses to help individuals experiencing homelessness in Eugene and in communities across our great state.

Thank you for your consideration,

Chris Hecht
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