



February 7, 2020

Representative Ron Noble  
900 Court St. NE  
H-380  
Salem, OR 97301

Re: SB 4047 Support, State Transient Lodging Tax

Dear Representative Noble,

On behalf of Visit McMinnville a member of the Oregon tourism industry, I am writing to urge your support of SB 4047 which would lift 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 a leader at a local Destination Management Organization (DMO) I urge you to lift the sunset and maintain the statewide TLT at 1.8%. The success of the programs administered by Travel Oregon through revenue generated from this tax have been critical to McMinnville, Yamhill County and the region's success in growing jobs and increased economic activity for our community.

I currently am the Executive Director of Visit McMinnville. I sit on the Yamhill County Tourism Partnership and have been appointed to the Board of Directors for the Willamette Valley Visitors Association.

I can tell you from first-hand experience that the additional TLT dollars passed through Travel Oregon's Regional Partnership program, to the Willamette Valley Visitors Association (WVVA) and on down the line to the county level, have been put to great use.

From 2017 to 2019, the additional funding has allowed the WVVA to move from a volunteer board of tourism stakeholders, to hiring an Executive Director and staff to execute, data-driven strategic promotional and development programs to impact the region. This has created additional jobs and revenue for the Willamette Valley as well as over \$224,000 of grant funding flowing back into businesses in the Willamette Valley.

The two largest economic sectors of Yamhill County have historically been manufacturing and agriculture. Over the past decade Yamhill County's growth in manufacturing has been outpacing nearly all other areas of the state. 1000 of the 1200 added jobs in the manufacturing sector have been in wine manufacturing. The wine industry in Oregon has a \$6 billion impact on the state. The majority of state wine assets are located in Yamhill County. The Oregon Wine industry relies heavily on direct to consumer purchasing, or visitors making purchases directly from wineries.

Currently Yamhill County puts funding into many economic development opportunities primarily by partnering with SEDCOR who deals mainly in traditional traded sector goods. They put zero dollars into strategically leveraging the visitor economy contrary to many other counties in the state.

Our area has a unique opportunity to further leverage the industries around us that provide serious economic impact. Given the current lack of focus and funding in Yamhill County regarding the visitor economy, we rely heavily on the support, funding and staffing of the regional tourism partners funded by the TLT.

The 1.8% state TLT has allowed us to just "tee up the ball" in our area. We feel that supporting HB 4047 would have a particularly positive impact on Yamhill County and on McMinnville and allow us to further move the economic needle in our area.

We urge you to consider supporting this bill. Please feel free to reach out with any questions.

Best Regards,

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Yamhill County Tourism Partnership  
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