



February 18, 2025

House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Subject: Opposition to HB 2977 – Misuse of Transient Lodging Tax Funds

Dear Co-Chairs Helm, Owens and Committee:

My name is Angie Villery, President & CEO of Travel Salem. I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB 2977, which proposes allocating Transient Lodging Tax (TLT) revenues to fund initiatives aimed at conserving Oregon's fish, wildlife, and habitats. While I fully support the protection of our state's natural resources, I believe it is inappropriate and unfair to place the burden of funding these efforts on visitors through the TLT.

I have been with Travel Salem for 18 years and have seen the impressive return on investment from the Transient Lodging Tax supports tourism promotion that attracts new and repeat visitors to Oregon. Over the last 20 years, visitor spending in Oregon has grown from \$6.5 billion in 2003 to \$14 billion in 2024. In the Salem region, visitor expenditures generate \$782 million annually and employ 7,500+ residents.

The TLT collected throughout Oregon was established for our communities to drive more visitor spending which enriches Oregon's economy. Currently local governments allocate most of the TLT revenues to non-tourism related purposes. By redirecting even more of these funds away from their intended use would further undermine tourism promotion efforts, ultimately impacting Oregon's economy.

The tourism industry is a vital economic development driver for Oregon through leisure visitation, business travel and relocation. Visitors should not be responsible for financing conservation programs that benefit the entire state.

I urge you to oppose HB 2977 and protect the integrity of the Transient Lodging Tax.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Angie Villery, President & CEO
Travel Salem
angie@TravelSalem.com