

Submitter: Stacey Lowry

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2977

Dear Representative's,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to any increase in Oregon's Transient Lodging Tax. As a small, independently owned lodging business, we are already operating within tight margins, and any additional tax burden would place an unfair strain on businesses like ours.

Unlike large hotel chains that can absorb these costs across hundreds of rooms, independent properties operate on much tighter margins. Our guests are price-sensitive, and with the increasing costs of operations—including wages, utilities, and maintenance—there is little room to absorb additional expenses.

In Brookings, the cost of visiting is already a concern for travelers. Restaurant prices have risen significantly, with most main dishes now over \$20. Grocery prices are high, gas prices remain steep, and even something as simple as two mediocre large pizzas now costs \$72—making a basic meal out for a family of four over \$100. Many visitors are already reconsidering Brookings as a destination because of these rising costs. We are stretched to what we can reasonably charge, and as a result, many of our long-term guests can no longer afford to stay with us. An increase in lodging tax will only make this worse.

Coastal communities like ours are already struggling. Seasonal tourism is the backbone of our local economy, and we cannot afford to lose visitors due to higher costs. Many small businesses here depend on the summer season to survive the slower months, and with inflation already making travel more expensive, an increased lodging tax could push even more tourists away. On top of that, we are already facing a 3% increase in our local county lodging tax, making it even harder for small businesses to remain competitive. Unlike larger cities with diverse industries, coastal towns rely heavily on visitor spending—losing those dollars would have a devastating ripple effect on restaurants, shops, and local workers.

Raising the transient lodging tax would not only hurt small business owners, but it could also discourage tourism, making Oregon a less competitive destination. Visitors have more options than ever before, and higher taxes could push them to choose more affordable locations. Instead of increasing this tax, we urge you to consider policies that support small businesses and encourage sustainable tourism growth.

I appreciate your time and consideration on this important issue. Please stand with small businesses and oppose any increase to the transient lodging tax.

Sincerely,
Stacey Lowry
General Manager
Ocean Suites Motel