

Submitter: Nora Herrera

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2977

The Transient Lodging Tax (TLT) was established by the 2003 Oregon Legislature. The revenue this tax generates funds the Oregon Tourism Commission programs. HB 2977 increases the state TLT from 1.5 percent to 2.5 percent and transfers the additional moneys raised through the increase to the Recovering Oregon's Wildlife Fund Subaccount, renamed from the Oregon Conservation Strategy Subaccount to fund projects in line with the "Oregon Conservation Strategy", and the "Oregon Nearshore Strategy".

While I support conservation, and the awareness of how tourism affects habitat and wildlife, I am opposed to the implementation of a TLT increase in order to fund this effort, and request the legislature investigate other options to generate funds. Please do not look to the TLT to fund anything other than the original tourism programs. Increasing the TLT to pay for other programs increases the operating costs for entities responsible for paying the TLT. Tourism is not the only source of stress on habitat and wildlife in the state of Oregon, and any increased taxes/funding should be implemented upon all users and not be placed solely upon a single set of users.

The county in which our short-term rental (STR) operates, was already granted permission by voters to increase the county TLT from 7 percent to up to 10 percent, with indications the TLT will be raised to 9 percent. If this is the case, this year we will have had our TLT increased from 8.5 percent (county + state) to 10.5 percent. If HB 2977 is passed, the TLT will increase to 11.5 percent. This amount may seem small by itself, but the cost to safely and appropriately maintain, support, permit, and operate a STR is substantial. Our family's personal goal has been to operate our home/STR at a rate where our costs are covered (or almost covered), and where we can give back to the community via sources of income for work associated with operating and maintaining our home. Every cost increase moves us away from supporting our community via our STR, and closer to our home sitting empty 98 percent of the year, which is lose-lose for everyone (including TLT recipients).

Thank you for your consideration.