



Sunriver Resort®

EST. 1968

February 21, 2025

Subject: Opposition to HB 2977

Dear Co-Chairs Helm and Owens, Vice-Chair McDonald and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water:

I am writing to express my ardent opposition to HB 2977, which proposes changes to the use of Transient Lodging Tax (TLT) funds in Oregon.

This legislation threatens to undermine vital tourism investments which bolster economic growth, enrich the visitor experience, and support off-season employment.

I am the Managing Director at Sunriver Resort, which is one of the largest employers in Central Oregon. While our high season is May-September, our goal is to attract & increase off-season business to enable our employees to receive more hours, and ultimately, yield more opportunities for year-round, full-time employment. Expanded hours also result in the ability to offer increased healthcare benefits.

As our region continues to grow, the increased numbers of visitors is reciprocally-supported by the augmented infrastructure needed to serve our guests. Tourism is a keystone of Oregon's economy, particularly in Central Oregon. Higher lodging costs can deter potential individual travellers & group attendees alike from choosing our destination, leading to lower visitor rates and diminished revenue streams for local businesses, particularly in the off-season when visitor spending is crucial. This reduction would stifle economic activity, full-time employment, & new job creation.

Since 2003, TLT investments have doubled visitor spending, tripled tax revenue, and stabilized jobs across the state. This data highlights the substantial economic return generated by dedicated tourism funding. HB 2977 threatens to disrupt this time-tested model, jeopardizing the economic benefits that tourism provides to communities statewide.

I strongly urge you to oppose HB 2977 and protect the integrity of Oregon's TLT funding model. Oregon's tourism industry, both on the macro & micro levels, is a vital economic engine, and maintaining robust tourism investments is critical to sustaining jobs, businesses, and community programs.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Tom O'Shea
Managing Director
Sunriver Resort