



February 23, 2025

HB 2977: Oppose TLT changes because a deal is a deal

Co-Chairs Helm and Owens, Vice-Chair McDonald and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Coos Bay North Bend Charleston Visitor and Convention Bureau – the local Destination Management Organization for Oregon’s Bay Area on the South Coast – I am writing today to register opposition to HB 2977.

In 2003 our state’s workforce opportunities were bleak and there were socio-economic impacts that spread from that. Then-Gov. Ted Kulongoski was looking for ways to create jobs for Oregonians in an environmentally responsible way. The tourism industry stepped up and did what few others would dare: They volunteered to have their own customers taxed so that Oregon could be developed and promoted as a tourism destination. This created the base state tax to fund Travel Oregon and tourism infrastructure.

Twenty-two years later, that gamble is paying off in a big way. Tourism is the top private industry in many rural and coastal communities in Oregon, creating thousands of jobs. In Oregon’s Bay Area alone – where our organization is the local Destination Management Organization – visitors spent \$147.9 million in 2023. This generated \$7.7 million in state and local taxes. Tourism directly supports 2,100 local jobs in our community with combined earnings of \$77.7 million.

While we support ODFW in its mission, we do not support this funding mechanism. The proposed tax on lodging does not match up with the intended use. This will open the door to other agencies and programs – however well-meaning and noble – seeking to tack on another unrelated tax. Over time, this will diminish the industry’s ability to raise the tax, should that be needed. That diminishes the intent of the Transient Lodging Tax. The tourism industry agreed to have its customers taxed for a specific purpose. This type of change deviates from that purpose. A deal is a deal and, because of that, we ask that you oppose HB 2977.

All the best,

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