



February 24, 2025

Representative Ken Helm, Chair

Representative Mark Owens, Chair

House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Oregon State Legislature

900 Court St. NE

Salem, OR 97301

RE: Salem Chamber Written Testimony in Opposition of HB 2977

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

Our organization represents over one thousand (1,000+) local businesses and forty-five thousand (45,000) employees in the Salem area. The breadth and diversity of industries represented by our membership demonstrate an intersection of the small businesses that collectively create our state economy. The Salem Chamber supports a healthy business climate and healthy conservation of Oregon’s wildlife but opposes changing the objectives of the Transient Lodging Tax (“TLT”).

Oregon’s Transient Lodging Tax (“TLT”) was designed to reinvest into our tourism promotion and destination development. This program has been successful in incentivizing visitor and tourist spending in our local economies creating employment opportunities and increasing state revenue. In the Salem area alone, visitor spending generates \$782 million per year and supports 7,500 local jobs.

Increasing the TLT from 1.5% to 2.5% would diminish the success of the program, making Oregon less competitive for tourism. It would disincentivize Oregon as a destination for conventions, outdoor sporting recreation, agritourism, and major event attractions while significantly altering the original objective of the TLT program by diverting funds to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (“ODFW”). Wildlife conservation should be funded by other means that don’t adversely affect tourism, business travel, and recreational activities that the TLT program promotes so effectively.

Please safeguard the TLT program so it can continue to be an economic catalyst for Oregon’s interstate and intrastate tourism.

Respectfully,

Tom Hoffert, CEO Salem Area Chamber of Commerce

President

Mike Herron • President
VIP’s Industries Inc.

Executive Committee

Brandon Blair • Secretary
Summit Wealth Management

Ryan Dempster • Treasurer
Willamette Valley Bank

Rich Duncan • VP of Advocacy
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State Farm Insurance

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Dan McDowell
Pioneer Trust Bank

Diane McLaran
McLaran Enterprises Inc

Tyson Pruett
DPW Certified Public Accountants

Bill Riecke
Bark Boys Inc.

Quandray Robertson
Q’s Corner Barber Shop

Randy Sutton
Saalfeld Griggs PC

Eric Templeton
AmeriTitle

Jim Vu
Core Solutions Consulting

Christy Witzke
SAIF

Chief Executive Officer

Tom Hoffert
Salem Area Chamber of Commerce