



Date: March 4, 2025

Name: Christina Rehkla

Bill Number and Committee: HB 2171 – Testimony to the House Committee on Economic Development, Small Business, and Trade

Dear Chair Nguyen, Vice-Chair Diehl, Vice-Chair Isadore, and Members of the House Committee on Economic Development, Small Business, and Trade:

My name is Christina Rehkla, and I am the Executive Director of Visit Corvallis. Our organization works with the Benton County Fairgrounds to promote events that bring visitors to our community and drive economic growth. I appreciate the opportunity to express my opposition to HB 2171, exempting certain fairground campsites from the Transient Lodging Tax (TLT).

Fairgrounds, like hotels and short-term rentals, benefit directly from tourism and should contribute to the very system that supports their success. TLT revenue plays a critical role in reinvesting in Oregon's visitor economy, funding destination marketing, event promotion, and infrastructure improvements that help fairgrounds and local businesses thrive. By exempting fairgrounds from this tax, HB 2171 creates an uneven playing field—placing the burden solely on traditional lodging properties while allowing fairgrounds to benefit without contributing.

In Benton County and across the state, TLT funding has assisted in enhancing fairground facilities, attracting larger events, and strengthening our local economies. Exempting fairgrounds from TLT weakens this reinvestment and sets a concerning precedent for future exemptions that could further erode tourism funding.

I urge you to oppose HB 2171 and ensure that all lodging entities—including fairgrounds—continue to contribute fairly to Oregon's tourism economy. Maintaining a strong, equitable TLT structure will help sustain the events, attractions, and businesses that make our communities vibrant places to visit and live.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate your commitment to supporting Oregon's tourism industry and local economies.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christina Rehkla".

Christina Rehkla