



**Date: 3.17.2025**

**Name:** Travel Pendleton

**Bill Number and Committee:** HB 3556 – Testimony to the House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans

Dear Chair Representative Thuy Tran, Vice-Chair Representative Dacia Grayber, Representative Rick Lewis, and members of the House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans

My name is Cheri Rosenberg-LaBoy and I am the CEO for the Pendleton Chamber of Commerce, which has oversight of our DMO, Travel Pendleton. I appreciate the opportunity to convey my opposition to HB 3556.

I have been the CEO here for seven years, and work with numerous tourism industries statewide in both the tourism sector as well as the economic development space.

It is the successful collaboration between the local and regional DMOs and Travel Oregon that is helping to generate economic activity and new jobs across Oregon, in even the most rural parts of our state. DMOs focus their tourism development and marketing programs on *non-peak* travel seasons because they know the importance of leveling the seasonality of tourism to create year-round job security and stability in our communities. That stability helps DMOs build a healthy tourism economy and implement local programs that are reflective of Oregon's values.

For example, at Travel Pendleton, we have implemented the following cutting edge programs to support our local community.

- *In Pendleton*, funds were allocated for a ticketing system to allow local entities the use of one ticketing system to help tourists with ticketing before they travel here. We have utilized those funds to uplift our grant program, along with the tourism incubator program that we are doing hand in hand with our city.
- *In Pendleton*, we have been able to market more effectively overnight events, our lodging properties, as well our community as a whole to drive increases across all sectors within our rural community.
- *In Pendleton*, given we are the only DMO in the region, we utilize lodging funds to elevate our region as a whole. None of this would be possible without the current breakdown that we have within our communities. These funds are vital to the continued level of services our communities and our visitors have come to expect.

At the state level, tourism has become a bedrock of Oregon's economy as a result of the Tourism Investment Proposal of 2003, which created Travel Oregon, established a dedicated funding source through the statewide transient lodging tax, and protected local funding investments in tourism.

During the recession of 2003, the Governor, legislature, and leaders across the state recognized that tourism was an untapped market and that strategic and sustained investment in tourism was needed to establish Oregon as a travel destination for business and leisure.

**Statewide Economic Impacts:**

Over the last 20 years, the return on the investments from statewide Transient Lodging Tax (TLTs) is clear:

- Visitor Spending in Oregon has more than doubled:  
\$6.5 billion in 2003; Now = \$14 billion
- State and Local TLT tax revenues have more than tripled:  
\$200 million in 2003; Now = \$650 million
- Demand has shifted:
  - Visitors to Oregon spend an additional 2.7 million nights in hotels alone compared to 2008 figures—overnight visitors spend more than residents while visiting restaurants, shops, and recreation businesses.
- Consistent growth in spending, earnings, employment, and tax revenue: 4% spending, 5% earnings, 1.6% employment, and 4.8% tax rev annually that outpaces inflation.

There are countless programs and stories from my community that have been galvanized by the state lodging tax investment to create sustainable product development and marketing programs. These opportunities are particularly vital to Oregon's rural communities as they continue to transition from resource-based economies to economies that include tourism marketing and management. We cannot afford to reduce or cease this momentum so critical to our rural partners.

Your opposition to HB 3556 will allow your constituents and businesses in our destination to consistently plan for strategic investments and to continue important projects and partnerships vital to Oregon's economic viability.

Thank you for helping your tourism constituency remain stewards of Oregon's natural wonders. We will continue our work to support vibrant local communities to improve livability for all residents of Oregon.

Thank you for the privilege to submit this testimony for your consideration.

*Cheri Rosenberg-LaBoy*  
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