

Submitter: Hyla Lipson
On Behalf Of: Josephine County Visitors Association
Committee: House Committee On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3556

I am a Josephine County Visitors' Association Board Member and the executive director of the Grants Pass Museum of Art. I am very opposed to taking any of the money from the lodging tax away from tourism. This would be a very big mistake. Tourism in Southern Oregon is an economic driver. At the museum, we track visitors and in one month had visits from 24 different US States, 26 Oregon cities, and 4 foreign countries. Having a robust marketing campaign for events and attractions helps to create a vibrant community. So many people rely on the addition of tourists in our city.

Tourism serves as a vital economic engine for Southern Oregon, significantly contributing to the region's financial health and community well-being. In 2023, direct travel spending in Southern Oregon reached approximately \$1.1 billion, marking a 4.2% increase from the previous year. This spending supported over 12,300 jobs, generating earnings of \$315 million for local workers. Additionally, travel-generated tax receipts amounted to \$55 million, benefiting both state and local governments.

Over the past decade, the tourism sector in Southern Oregon has demonstrated robust growth. Between 2013 and 2023, travel spending in the region increased by 35%, translating to an average annual growth rate of approximately 3.5%. Employment in the tourism industry expanded by 20% during the same period, adding nearly 2,050 jobs. Earnings for employees in this sector saw a cumulative rise of 28%, reflecting enhanced income opportunities for residents.

Please oppose this measure. I truly appreciate your consideration on this matter.