

Submitter: Colt Foster

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3556

This bill bastardizes the intended purpose of the TLT. Throughout the years we have seen the core economic drivers of Oregon fall by the wayside like logging etc. It is important for our economic well being to do everything we can from every corner of the state to generate economic growth in any way possible to replace our historic economic drivers. Focusing on tourism is an enormous piece of the pie needed to generate jobs, growth, and income. Every dollar that gets diverted away from that purpose is a direct hit to our whole state and will pacify our growth and the economic well being of Oregonians. Anyone that asks themselves honestly, "what is the purpose of this tax?", should be able to easily identify that it is to promote our state, our counties, our towns, our communities. Offering any leeway from this purpose is a misappropriation of funds and an act of war against our economy and citizens.

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.