

Date: March 18, 2025

Name: Deb Shaw, Operations Manager, Prineville Crook County Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center/ Explore Prineville

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

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

I'm writing to you as a state resident and tourism industry member with deep concern regarding House Bill 3556.

My name is Deb Shaw and I am the Operations Director for the Prineville Crook County Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center. This bill directly threatens my business and countless others in Oregon's tourism and hospitality sector. In fact, all seven tourism regions in Oregon have still not recovered to 2019 occupancy levels. By allowing local governments to divert transient lodging tax (TLT) revenue away from tourism promotion and tourism-related facilities to fund public safety and local infrastructure, HB 3556 pulls the rug out from under the very industry that generates those funds.

Let me be clear: tourism is the lifeblood of my business and a growing economic sector in my community. We rely on a strong tourism economy to bring visitors to our area, fill our establishments, and support local jobs. The TLT funds, as they are currently used, play a critical role in this. They support regional marketing efforts and attractions, which draw visitors from across the state and beyond.

If HB 3556 passes, these vital funds could be siphoned off, leaving our tourism efforts underfunded and our communities less attractive to visitors. This isn't just about abstract budgets; it's about real-world consequences. It's about:

- Fewer overnight visitors coming to our region, leading to decreased revenue for our organization that relies on TRT's as our main source of profit.
- Reduced marketing for our region, making it harder to compete with other destinations.
- Less investment in the tourism infrastructure that makes our area appealing.

Oregon's lodging businesses like mine collect over \$220 million in TLT for local governments every year. We are essentially acting as collection agents, with those funds intended to support the industry. Weakening this funding mechanism will have ripple effects across the state, impacting businesses and the communities the hospitality industry serves.

I urge you to vote NO on HB 3556. Please don't jeopardize the future of my business, my employees, and the many other hardworking Oregonians who depend on a thriving tourism industry.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Deb Shaw

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