

Submitter: Sharon Konopa

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3556

?House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government and Veterans.
Regarding: HB3556

Please vote no on HB3556.

Dear House Committee Members:

I have been involved with Albany's city government for almost 30 years, as a city committee member, 12-year city councilor, and 12 years as mayor. I have seen the great benefits of tourism from our transient lodging taxes, TLT.

I also own a home in the Sunriver, where that community generates the largest portion of Deschutes County's TLT, and this community's economy relies on tourism. If more TLT is siphoned off to non-tourism promotion programs, then the county's revenues will decline in tourism.

In 2010, I formed a tax force in Albany to establish a policy for allocating our TLT funds. The task force's focus for dollars to be distributed were to promote visitors and hotel stays in Albany. Our TLT dollars kept increasing every year after that program was established.

Then city staff shifted this designated fund into the economic development fund and started staffing positions from some of the TLT. Since I left my office in 2021, they have shifted more dollars away from our local tourism partners to where these agencies are barely hanging on.

This was not right to shift dollars away from tourism promotion. And now we are seeing declining revenues from TLT because there are less promotions of Albany. This is not fair to our hoteliers, who collect this tax which adds on to the cost of their hotel stays in Albany.

This also is not fair for our community with less events that were supported from TLT. My point here, TLT is for promoting tourism and events in a community and it should not be for backfilling a city or county budget. I am a strong supporter of government services, but they have their pot of funds to administer and should not be dipping into other pots.

Please do not make any changes to the current Transient Lodging Taxes programs.

This tax is to benefit the residents of a community where the taxes are imposed.

Please vote no on HB3556.

Sharon Konopa

Albany and Sunriver.

