

# Mereté

Hotel  Management

March 19, 2025

House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Re: HB3556 Relating to the use of local transient tax revenue

Chair Tran and Members of the Committee:

My name is Richard Boyles, President of Merete Hotel Management, a Lane County-based company and an active and long-time member of the Oregon hospitality community. I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB 3556, which proposes extending the use of Transient Lodging Tax (TLT) revenues to fund public safety services and other costs related to community infrastructure.

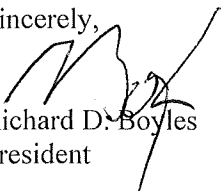
At the state level, tourism has become a cornerstone of Oregon's economy, largely due to the Tourism Investment Proposal of 2003. This initiative established Travel Oregon, created a dedicated funding source through the statewide transient lodging tax (TLT), and safeguarded local investments in tourism. The TLT has the best return on investment when it is used to attract visitors to Oregon who generate revenue for all communities and Oregon. Diverting TLT to other purposes jeopardizes these efforts by allowing even broader uses of these limited resources, and we lose sight of its original purpose: to drive economic impact from visitors and support local tourism marketing and development programs that increase visitation.

The tourism industry is a vital economic development driver for Oregon through leisure visitation, business travel and relocation. Tourism-related businesses do more than just generate Transient Lodging Tax (TLT) revenue. They also contribute through property taxes, licensing fees, and other local taxes that support critical city and county services. A robust tourism economy helps these businesses remain successful, which in turn sustains important tax revenue for municipalities. Eroding the TLT structure doesn't only harm tourism—it impacts the entire local economy.

Finally, our cities and Lane County rely on transient lodging taxes to fund essential services and projects. As an example, the Florence Events Center, a central hub for music, theater, and community events, plans an expansion, with transient lodging taxes playing a crucial role in the funding. Additionally, for most of the last decade, Travel Lane County and local advocates have worked to secure an indoor multiuse facility that would provide important practice and competition space for both youth and adults, while also fostering economic growth by hosting year-round tournaments. This facility could help maintain visitor demand and provide stable, year-round employment. Redirecting transient lodging tax revenues to other purposes would undermine tourism's ability to invest in critical infrastructure projects like these.

Again, I urge you to oppose HB 3556 and protect the integrity of the Transient Lodging Tax.

Sincerely,

  
Richard D. Boyles  
President

840 Bellline Rd Suite 202  
Springfield, OR 97477  
(541) 746-8444  
meretehotels.com