

Patrick Gross, Corvallis OR

19 March 2025

RE: Opposition to HB 3556

Dear Chair Tran, Vice-Chair Grayber, Vice-Chair Lewis, and House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans:

My name is Patrick Gross and I am Real Estate Broker as well as a Visit Corvallis board member here in Corvallis. I appreciate the opportunity to share my concerns about HB 3556 and respectfully urge you to oppose this bill.

Tourism is not just about visitors—it supports local businesses, creates jobs, and brings money into our communities. The Transient Lodging Tax (TLT) was designed to fund tourism efforts, helping towns and cities across Oregon attract visitors who spend money at restaurants, shops, and local events. HB 3556 would take money away from these efforts and redirect it elsewhere, even though tourism already helps fund city services through its tax revenue.

I believe much of the support for this bill stems from a misunderstanding of the TLT history, current distribution, and purpose:

Many believe that all tourism organizations receive 70% of TLT funds, but that's not true. In Corvallis, only 30% of the City's 9% goes to tourism, while the rest helps fund other city services. Benton County also has a 3% lodging tax, of which 70% helps fund the Benton County Fairgrounds and Event Center, and the remaining 30% is retained for their general fund. Even with this setup, there are still budget gaps. This bill won't fix those—it will only make it harder for tourism to bring in the dollars that support our community.

Tourism critically supports community vitality and growth here: many of my homebuyer clients discovered us initially—as tourists.

Additionally, tourism businesses pay more than lodging taxes—they also pay property taxes, licensing fees, and other local taxes that help fund essential city and county services. A strong tourism economy benefits everyone, and reducing tourism funding could actually lower overall tax revenue for cities and counties.

For these reasons, I strongly urge you to oppose HB 3556. Tourism is an investment in our community, and protecting TLT funds ensures that our cities, small businesses, and local events continue to thrive.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

/Patrick Gross