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

Re: HB 3556 Relating to the use of local transient tax revenue;

To Chair Tran and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to express my opposition to HB 3556. I have enjoyed a thirty-year career in tourism marketing and development, including most of those years as director of a destination management organization and 29 years serving on the board of directors of the Eastern Oregon Visitors Association, with a stint or two as board president. I also represent two popular visitor attractions in Northeast Oregon. Many of us in Eastern Oregon lobbied hard for the creation of the Oregon transient lodging tax in 2003 and remain steadfast in our support of the funds generated from the state and local TLT taxes being invested back into tourism marketing and development.

I realize it is a challenge to fund the increasing costs of government, including the all-important public safety and community infrastructure. However, I argue that taking from the program that generates the funds and effectively invests them back into creating more jobs, improving facilities and enhancing economic development is *not a good strategy*. Tourism dollars spread broadly throughout the business community, creating more choices and recreation assets for residents, as well as visitors. The proven return on investment is impressive.

Over the years, I have seen and been impacted by the struggle for use of TLT funds, at the local, regional and state levels. I've witnessed what happens when tourism programs are gutted in order to shift the funds to other uses. In some cases, the programs never recovered and the loss in tourism business share for the communities was substantial.

I urge you to vote 'no' on HB 3556. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Janet E. Dodson

