



OREGON STATE FIRE FIGHTERS COUNCIL

International Association of Fire Fighters
AFL-CIO CLC

March 19, 2025

House Committee on Emergency Management General Government and Veterans
Chair Representative Thuy Tran
Vice Chair Rick Lewis
Vice Chair Dacia Grayber

Madame Chair and Vice Chairs, Committee Members,

For the record, my name is Karl Koenig, President of the Oregon State Fire Fighters Council. We represent over 3800 career fire fighters, paramedics, wildland and fire prevention personnel throughout the entire State of Oregon.

Today we are testifying in favor of House Bill 3556. This Bill has brought up some very lively discussions regarding the appropriate use of the local Transient Lodging Tax or TLT as its known across the entire state.

The TLT is a significant local revenue source directly attributed to those who come from out of state to experience Oregon. This program is clearly successful, based on spending in the community and state. What we don't have is an impact number on public safety, not to mention the availability of police fire and EMS as a result of the sometimes doubling or tripling of populations in multiple cities and areas across the state. In its current tax structure, the residents and business owners pay outright for those services through property tax and receive, at times, slower or under staffed resources as the result of large events.

Perhaps it's important to consider the impact to public safety as it relates to tourism in Oregon. A reminder that HB 3556 *may* allow cities, counties or special districts to use TLT funds for public safety that includes police fire and EMS. Essential service is also part of the destination goal of creating an attractive community to visit and spend their tourist dollars. This bill does not mandate the expenditure on public safety it allows that to happen as a matter public debate and discussion by local elected officials and informing those impacted the consequence of spending those dollars on public safety.

Without going into property tax limitation, urban renewal, and affordability of living across Oregon, your fire fighters think local control and direction remains in this bill which is paramount for the community to have the option to expend TLT revenues on public safety.

Committee, please consider this Bill as a good option to leverage tourist dollars to keep a balanced approach to using these funds.

Join your fire fighters in supporting House Bill 3556 in Committee

Thank you,

Karl Koenig

Karl Koenig

President

Oregon State Fire Fighters Council