



CITY OF BEND

March 19, 2025

House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97701

RE: City of Bend Testimony urging HB 3556 be moved to House Committee on Revenue

Chair Tran, Vice-Chairs Grayber and Lewis, and Members of the Committee:

The City of Bend is writing today to urge that House Bill 3556 be moved to the House Committee on Revenue with a do-pass recommendation.

We strongly support advancing legislation that would allow for additional flexibility in the use of locally established lodging tax revenue. The City of Bend enjoys significant economic benefits from tourism. But tourism also comes with significant impacts, including critical infrastructure and public safety services. Because of restrictions on our ability to receive revenue from property taxes commensurate with growth in property values, and the increasing costs we are all feeling in Oregon, we are not able to pay for the infrastructure and level of services that would best benefit residents and visitors alike.

Our hope is to gain the ability to make a wider array of tourism investments that address these impacts while also continuing to support tourism by making our city safer and our infrastructure systems more robust. We are committed to protecting the level of investment we currently make via Visit Bend, which is an organization that also does incredible work reinvesting in arts, culture, and tourism related facilities. However, our community has asked us repeatedly to find other ways to invest revenue raised from tourism that go beyond marketing and benefit everyone who lives here.

We do believe that HB 3556 needs to be narrowed somewhat to ensure a more direct tourism nexus in the investments that local governments are allowed to make. The base bill is too broad in that regard. The legislature should clarify whether it seeks more flexibility for our existing (post-2003) lodging tax increments or for future increments. As stated above, the City of Bend does not intend to change our current level of investment at Visit Bend, but additional flexibility will help ensure that we can make more creative and needed tourism-impact related investments going forward and thereby better balance the needs of tourism and our community.

Please advance this legislation to the House Committee on Revenue where we can continue to work on and improve this bill. We urge that this work occur with a do-pass recommendation.

Thank you and please do not hesitate to reach out to the City of Bend with any questions.

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "MK", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Melanie Kebler
Mayor, City of Bend





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