

Submitter: Sean Briscoe

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3556

Dear Chair Tran, Vice-Chair Grayber, Vice-Chair Lewis, members of the House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government, Veterans, and Rep. Breese-Iverson,

As an active supporter of the A. R. Bowman Museum in Prineville, Oregon, I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB 3556, currently under consideration in the 83rd Oregon Legislative Assembly. As a supporter of the A.R. Bowman Museum, I believe this bill could have unintended consequences that may adversely affect cultural institutions like ours.

House Bill 3556 proposes extending the permissible uses of net revenue from new or increased local transient lodging taxes to include public safety services and certain community infrastructure costs.

The A.R. Bowman Museum, established in 1971, serves as a cornerstone for preserving and promoting the rich history of Crook County and Central Oregon. It attracts over 10,000 visitors annually, offering insights into our region's pioneer heritage, timber industry, and railroad history. In addition, the A. R. Bowman Museum hosts year-round events that drive business to hotels, restaurants, and shops, supporting the livelihoods of those who call Crook County home. Traditionally, a significant portion of local transient lodging tax revenues has been allocated to support cultural and tourism-related entities like the Bowman Museum. The Transient Room Tax accounts for 25% of the museum's annual budget. These funds are vital for maintaining exhibits, organizing educational programs, and ensuring that both residents and visitors can engage with our shared history.

While I acknowledge the importance of funding public safety and infrastructure, expanding the use of lodging tax revenues as outlined in HB 3556 could divert essential resources away from cultural institutions and negatively impact the Crook County economy. Such a shift may jeopardize the financial stability of museums and similar organizations, hindering their ability to contribute to local tourism and education.

I respectfully urge you to oppose HB 3556 and consider the potential impact on cultural and historical institutions. It is crucial to ensure that any reallocation of funds does not compromise the support these organizations rely on to preserve our heritage and enrich our communities.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.
Sincerely,

Sean Briscoe
Executive Director
Bowman Museum