

**Oregon Coast Visitors Association**

PO Box 940

Tillamook, Oregon 97141



March 20, 2025

Dear Chair Tran, Vice-Chairs Grayber and Lewis, and members of the committee:

The Oregon Coast Visitors Association urges you to oppose HB 3556.

Tourism contributes \$2.3 billion and nearly 26,000 jobs to the coastal economy, but this level of economic activity is far from guaranteed.

Without continued investment in destination marketing and management, visitors to Oregon will choose to travel elsewhere, taking their dollars with them. This will have a devastating effect on the rural businesses that rely on visitor spending, from hardware stores and landscape companies, to farmstands and craft brewers, to museums and theaters.

Oregon Coast destination management organizations focus their tourism development and marketing programs on non-peak travel seasons, leveling the seasonality of tourism to create year-round job security, economic stability, and recreational and cultural opportunities that benefit residents.

The current TLT allocation enables the tourism industry to reinvest in our communities: enhancing visitor experiences, supporting community infrastructure, and marketing the Oregon Coast as a premier, sustainable destination for visitors from around the globe. Reducing this funding will harm communities through lopsided visitation seasons and overall fewer travelers to our communities, leading to lower tax revenues and tourism business disinvestment.

The Oregon Coast is a world-class destination that offers outdoor experiences and access to nature like no other place on earth. TLT funds support the programs that help preserve our unique ecosystems and landscapes. The current TLT allocation allows the tourism industry to reinvest in conservation and sustainability work and share stewardship messaging that encourages Oregon Coast visitors to take care and give back to the Coast and its communities.

On the Oregon Coast, TLT dollars enable a wide range of community benefit projects including trail development and maintenance, tidepool ambassador programs, accessibility improvements, beach cleanups and citizen science efforts, car-free and electric transportation solutions, seafood industry support and development, funding for arts and cultural heritage organizations, and more.

These investments benefit local residents, communities, and ecosystems, improving quality of life for our rural communities. Without the investment of TLT dollars responsibly managed by destination organizations, many of these programs would cease to exist for lack of funds.

While we recognize the budget challenges faced by municipalities, reallocating the funding that supports the vital economic engine of tourism will only harm local communities in the long run. The Oregon Coast Visitors Association would prefer to partner with city and county governments on mutually beneficial approaches to public safety and other concerns.

For example, our organization provided startup funding for Curry County Aquatic Safety program, proactively working to promote safe recreation and prevent public safety emergencies. The Oregon Coast Visitors Association also partners with coastal land managers to create and share seasonal safety, stewardship, and responsible recreation messaging through our strategic advisory group. Our unique access to visitor audiences allows us to effectively promote responsible travel on the Oregon Coast

HB 3556 is not the solution the Oregon Coast needs. Our shared challenges are best met through collaboration and partnership. The Oregon Coast Visitors Association opposes HB 3556, and we urge this committee to do the same.

Sincerely,

Karen Olson

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Olson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Communications Director  
Oregon Coast Visitors Association