

Submitter:

Rachel Watkins

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB2977

May 6th, 2025

House Committee on Revenue.

Oregon State Capitol

900 Court Street NE

Salem, Oregon 97301

Chair Nathanson, Vice-Chair Reschke, Vice-Chair Walters, and members of the House Committee on Revenue,

I'm writing to you as a state resident and hospitality industry member in opposition to House Bill 2977. This bill directly threatens our business and countless others in Oregon's hospitality sector. Albany's hotels have not recovered to 2019 occupancy levels and unfortunately our hotels are already seeing the repercussions of the current economic uncertainty, this is NOT the time to add additional taxes to travel. Increasing the state lodging tax would undermine Oregon's competitiveness in the travel and tourism industry. Visitors consider total costs when choosing destinations, and meeting planners often compare tax burdens when selecting event locations. A higher lodging tax may hinder efforts to restore group travel and business events in Oregon to pre-pandemic levels.

We respectfully urge the legislature to reject any proposals that would increase the statewide lodging tax or divert its revenues to non-tourism-related programs. These changes would diminish Oregon's competitive edge, place undue strain on businesses that rely on tourism, and weaken an essential sector of Oregon's economy.

This isn't just about abstract budgets; it's about real-world consequences. It's about:

- Fewer visitors coming to my business, leading to decreased revenue.
- Increasing costs to potential visitors, making it harder to compete with other destinations.
- Less investment in the tourism infrastructure that makes our area appealing.

I urge you to vote NO on HB 2977. Please don't jeopardize the future of my business, employees, and the many other hardworking Oregonians who depend on a thriving tourism industry.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Rachel Watkins

Rachel Watkins - Director of Sales -Phoenix Inn Suites - 3410 Spicer Drive SE
Albany, Oregon