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HB 3962 – Testimony to the House Committee on Revenue

Dear Chair Nathanson, Vice-Chair Reschke, Vice Chair Walters and Members of the Committee.

My name is Jim Etzel and I am the Chief Executive Director for Sport Oregon. This letter serves as Sport Oregon's opposition to HB 3962 and the importance that local governments support the current Transient Lodging Tax (TLT) system that help DMOs and RDMOOs as well as local small businesses utilize the economic development structure currently in law.

Sport Oregon is a non-profit association with over 125 diverse members whose mission is to spur economic growth and enhance positive social impacts through sport. We work to bring international, national and regional sporting events to our city and state that help drive economic impact for Oregon. The TLT is a key component to the success we have achieved over the past several years of having key sports tourism events here in Oregon- yes even to the grand prize of the NCAA Women's Final Four Tournament in 2030 which will catapult Portland and the state to new heights.

There is a host of national data on the value of sport tourism published annually by Sports ETA (Sport Events and Tourism Association) who recently stated in its 2023 report that 63% of destinations cite sports as the top room night generator in their destination.

It is the successful collaboration that Sport Oregon enjoys between the local and regional DMOs as well as Travel Oregon that is helping to generate economic activity and new jobs across Oregon, in even the most rural parts of our state. DMOs focus their tourism development and marketing programs on non-peak travel seasons since they know the importance of leveling the seasonality of tourism to create year-round job security and stability in our communities. We help in any way we can to bring local sporting events during these times. That stability helps DMOs build a healthy tourism economy and implement local programs that are reflective of Oregon's values.

At the state level, tourism has become a bedrock of Oregon's economy as a result of the Tourism Investment Proposal of 2003, which established a dedicated funding source through the statewide transient lodging tax and protected local funding investments in tourism.

Lodging taxes at the state and local level are intended to be used to promote tourism and build economic development in their communities. In fact, we should be attempting to have jurisdictions spend a higher percentage on tourism promotion to help the businesses who struggle to continue to serve the communities they reside in.

Please oppose HB 3962. Help our DMOs and RDMOs do their work effectively, which results in economically healthy communities and helps our local small businesses survive during these tumultuous times.

Thank you!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Etzel", with a stylized, flowing script.

Jim Etzel. CEO Sport Oregon
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