

Submitter: Scottie Jones

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3962

Scottie Jones

RE: Opposition to HB 3962

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

My name is Scottie Jones and I am a business owner in Alsea, Waldport and Newport, hosting guests at my farm stay and also two vacation rentals on the Coast. I am also a former board member of Visit Corvallis and am currently a member of the Community Action Committee here in Alsea. I appreciate the opportunity to share my concerns about HB 3962 and respectfully urge you to oppose this bill.

Tourism is not just about visitors—it supports local businesses, creates jobs, and brings money into our communities. The Transient Lodging Tax (TLT) was designed to fund tourism efforts, helping towns and cities across Oregon attract visitors who spend money at restaurants, shops, and local events. HB 3962 would take money away from these efforts and redirect it elsewhere, even though tourism already helps fund city services through its tax revenue.

Many believe that all tourism organizations receive 70% of TLT funds, but that's not true. In Corvallis, only 30% of the City's 9% goes to tourism, while the rest helps fund other city services. Benton County also has a 3% lodging tax, of which 70% helps fund the Benton County Fairgrounds and Event Center, and the remaining 30% is retained for their general fund. Even with this setup, there are still budget gaps. This bill won't fix those—it will only make it harder for tourism to bring in the dollars that support our community.

Tourism supports my sheep farm by making travelers aware I exist and offer both tours and lodging. Being out in Alsea is not exactly on the beaten path. The Mid-Willamette Valley Food Trail, funded by Visit Corvallis and Travel Oregon, and the direct marketing these organizations provide me through their websites and contacts have helped to build my business. Our Waldport property has benefited from the Oregon Coast Visitors Association, as Waldport does not have the cache of Newport or Yachats. The Newport property is on the same street as many of the hotels and benefits from the marketing it receives from the tourism dollars that flow into the visitor's center there. There are a lot of people and programs driving guests to our properties and we hire locals in all of them for repairs, cleaning, and oversight. Additionally, tourism businesses pay more than lodging taxes—they also pay property taxes, licensing fees, and other local taxes that help fund essential city and county services. A strong tourism economy benefits everyone, and reducing tourism funding could actually lower overall tax revenue for cities and counties.

For these reasons, I strongly urge you to oppose HB 3962. Tourism is an investment in our community, and protecting TLT funds ensures that our cities, small businesses,

and local events continue to thrive.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Scottie Jones

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