

Submitter: BETTINA HANNIGAN
On Behalf Of: Florence Area Chamber of Commerce
Committee: House Committee On Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3962

House Committee on Revenue
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Opposition to HB 3962 – Relating to Local Taxation

Chair Nathanson, Co-Chairs Reschke and Walters, and Members of the Committee:

As President/CEO of the Florence Area Chamber of Commerce and a member of the Oregon State Chamber board, I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB 3962. On behalf of Florence—one of Oregon’s most tourism-dependent and economically vulnerable communities—I urge you to consider the far-reaching implications this bill would have on small rural towns like ours.

Florence is a community of under 10,000 residents, and tourism is not just an industry here—it is a lifeline. The transient lodging tax (TLT) provides the essential funding that powers our local economy, supports cultural infrastructure like the Florence Events Center, and sustains marketing programs that help keep our Main Street businesses open, especially during non-peak seasons.

HB 3962 opens the door to shifting these already limited tourism funds toward unrelated uses. That may sound flexible in theory, but in practice, it would strip rural communities of the resources we rely on to survive seasonal downturns, attract off-season visitors, and build the kind of infrastructure that drives sustainable growth. Redirecting TLT away from tourism investments will weaken the very foundation that supports our economic resilience.

Let me be clear: our hospitality businesses do more than generate lodging tax revenue. They contribute significantly through property taxes, licensing fees, and employment taxes—all of which help fund essential services in our region. A strong tourism economy benefits everyone, not just visitors. It fuels local government, supports living-wage jobs, and helps create vibrant communities where people want to live and work.

In 2023, visitor spending in Lane County surpassed \$1 billion, generating an estimated \$50 million in state and local taxes. Florence contributes a meaningful portion of that revenue—and we have plans to grow our impact. Our community is

exploring an expansion of the Florence Events Center and evaluating additional investments to attract year-round visitation. These projects are made possible by TLT—and will not be feasible if those funds are diluted or redirected.

Now is not the time to weaken our ability to compete for visitors or fund strategic growth. Our small coastal town has done the work: we've built the partnerships, we've embraced destination management, and we've worked hard to become a year-round destination. We ask you to help protect that progress.

Please stand with rural Oregon and oppose HB 3962.

Sincerely,
Bettina Hannigan
President/CEO
Florence Area Chamber of Commerce
FlorenceChamber.com