

Submitter:

Sharon Konopa

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB3962

?Dear Chair Nathanson and House Revenue Committee:

There was a load of public testimony in opposition to HB 3556, which proposed to change the rules over Transient Lodging Taxes (TLT) that are imposed on lodging that promote tourism. So much for everyone testifying against the bill, because now it popped up in this bill, HB 3962-2.

Please take into consideration the majority of the supporters of this bill are city or county employees wanting to shift the dollars to other programs that are not tourism related and very subjective text for "tourism related ". Many cities have been imposing city service fees on utility bills to offset the rising costs of public safety and city services. Mind you all because of the demands from population growth. And now that isn't enough and they want other pots of funds for services.

The public enjoys the dollars generated from TLT to help promote and provide fun community events. The public doesn't care about infrastructure, they want a concert, festival or expo event to attend. Once you open this Pandoras Box by shifting tourism dollars to public safety or infrastructure then a community will lose their amenities and events. Albany has one two-day festival the police patrol and one parade. Three days out of 365 in a year is not enough of a demand on public safety to change the TLT policy.

City administration needs to live within their means and stop trying to dip into other pots of funds. I would say this is getting pretty desperate. TLT was established to promote tourism and events. Don't change the rules because a city or county struggles to stay within their budget. Oregonians want some fun to enjoy, don't take that away from us. City's have other avenues to raise funds.

I have been involved in city government for 30 years now and elected for 24 years, as a former city councilor and mayor. Believe me, the TLT dollars are needed for tourism promotion and every non-profit agency that promotes events from these funds are not making the wages and benefits as city employees. These agencies work hard with the limited resources they receive. These dollars stretch out a lot farther with non-profits than city employees, so please do not chop away their limited funds and don't take away funds from our concerts. Vote No on HB 3962 -2.

Sharon Konopa, former Mayor of Albany