

Submitter:

Amrit Singh

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB2977

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

I am writing to express my opposition to House Bill 2977, which proposes increasing the state's transient lodging tax from 1.5% to 2.5%, with the additional revenue allocated to the Recovering Oregon's Wildlife Fund managed by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The 1.5% statewide tax is in addition to the city and county taxes already collected at the local level, all of which add to the cost of visiting and staying, and the bulk of which often go to local jurisdictions' general funds. We understand the importance of balancing conservation efforts with economic sustainability. However, increasing the lodging tax would negatively impact local businesses, the tourism industry, and the jobs that depend on visitor spending. Guests of our property pay upwards of 13% in occupancy taxes, and it does not go unnoticed by them. Consumers have become increasingly price-conscious, and increasing this tax would have negative impacts on Oregon as a competitive destination to visit. Raising the transient lodging tax would not only hurt small business owners, but it could also discourage tourism, making Oregon a less competitive destination. Visitors have more options than ever before, and higher taxes could push them to choose more affordable locations.

Please vote against HB 2977. We support species conservation, but there is no correlation between species conservation and a lodging tax increase.