

Submitter:

Tina Patel

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB2977

Dear Members of the House Committee on Revenue,

I am writing to strongly oppose HB 2977, which would impose a 1.25% increase to the statewide lodging Tax to support the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW). While I respect the role of ODFW in protecting Oregon's natural resources, this proposal is an inappropriate and unfair use of tourism-related tax revenue.

This increase would directly affect every visitor staying in cities like Eugene, which thrives on tourism—whether for athletics, business events, education, the arts, or

recreation. Adding another tax burden on travelers makes Oregon a less attractive destination and hurts local economies that depend on tourism spending. Lodging taxes

are already built into the cost of travel, and increasing them further—especially for a purpose unrelated to tourism—sends the wrong message to visitors and undermines our competitiveness.

More importantly, this proposal violates the core intent of Oregon's lodging tax system. The statewide lodging tax was established to support tourism promotion, destination development, and visitor services. These investments directly drive travel to

our communities and generate significant economic benefits for businesses, workers, and local governments. Diverting those funds to an agency like ODFW, which does not

have a direct tourism mission, weakens the foundation of the system and sets a harmful

precedent for future misuse.

If ODFW faces internal funding challenges, the solution should come through agency reforms or general fund appropriations—not by placing the burden on travelers

and the hospitality sector.

I urge you to protect Oregon's tourism economy and reject HB 2977. Let's preserve the original purpose of the lodging tax and ensure these funds continue to support the industries and communities they were designed to serve.