

June 24, 2025

RE: Opposition to HB 2977

Dear Members of the Committee:

I am writing to express my concern about House Bill 2977 that increases the state's lodging tax to fund a Recovering Oregon's Wildlife Fund.

As you know, the state lodging tax was specifically established to provide funding for Travel Oregon, enabling them to effectively promote our state as a premier tourist destination. This dedicated funding source is crucial for the health and growth of our tourism industry. Increasing this tax will put Oregon at a disadvantage making our total lodging tax higher than San Francisco. It will drive down tourism even further in the state. Portland is already a place people are hesitant to travel to and increasing the lodging tax will only make it harder to achieve the tourism levels the state had pre-COVID.

Currently, the state lodging tax generates approximately \$40 million annually. In contrast, the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) receives significantly more funding, around \$380 million. The proposed bill seems to be an attempt by the DFW to access the lodging tax revenue, which, in my opinion, unfairly shifts their financial responsibilities onto our visitors.

I strongly urge you to oppose this bill. Implementing another tax on our visitors through the lodging tax will undoubtedly endanger our tourism industry, which is a vital component of our state's economy.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

*Jason Coleman*

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