



OREGON HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

June 25, 2025

Chair Jama and members of the Senate Committee on Rules,

At yesterday's public hearing on House Bill 2977 Jason Brandt, President and CEO of the Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association (ORLA), in representing ORLA made an expansive statement that I, in my capacity as State Representative and sponsor of HB 2977, had never attempted to meet with him to discuss or negotiate a change in our state transient lodging tax. His statement is incorrect. Attached is a short documentation of just some of the numerous communications that I and members of the coalition supporting HB 2977 have had this session and in past sessions with ORLA, its lobbyist and representatives. Included in these communications is a specific invite to Jason Brandt and Greg Astley, ORLA's Director of Government Affairs. An invite to which they did not even do me the courtesy of responding.

Whether Jason Brandt was intentionally lying to the committee is hard to know and I will give him the benefit of the doubt. What is inexcusable, however, is that ORLA's lobbyist, Bill Perry, who was in the room, did not attempt to correct the obvious notion that I have not been in communication with ORLA numerous times, both formally and informally, every session in which I have proposed an increase in the state TLT. In each of those exchanges, the flat response has been that ORLA is unwilling to meaningfully discuss the proposal.

It is unknown to me whether Mr. Perry has been utilizing this false rhetoric in his lobbying interactions with members of the House and Senate. If that is the case, then his actions are disingenuous to the point of outright falsehood.

I have held myself to the highest ethical standards in my work in the House of Representatives since joining in 2015. I cannot let this attempt to taint my reputation and integrity pass without calling it out. Therefore, with this letter, Mr. Perry now has the opportunity to publicly correct both Mr. Brandt's statements and any of his own that imply that I have not been available to discuss my TLT-related proposals this session or any other session.

Sincerely,

Representative Ken Helm
House District 27
Oregon State Legislature

Documented examples of outreach to ORLA and its partners regarding TLT proposals

- **December 18, 2020 – email from Representative Helm’s office to Greg Astley (ORLA Director of Government Affairs) and Jason Brandt (ORLA President and CEO):**

From: Rep Helm <Rep.KenHelm@oregonlegislature.gov>

Sent: Friday, December 18, 2020 2:24 AM

To: Greg Astley <astley@oregonrla.org>

Cc: Jason Brandt <jbrandt@oregonrla.org>; William Perry <bill@bpsoregon.com>

Subject: RE: ORLA position on LC 10

“Dear Greg,

I hope you’re well, and surviving the pre-session push. I wanted to circle back and thank you for providing this background. Rep. Helm is hoping you might have time in coming weeks to discuss this and other legislative priorities for 2021.

Do you happen to be available for a 30-minute virtual meeting on Tue 12/22 between 9am-10am or 11:30am-3pm? If not, please feel free to send over other dates that might work for you after the holidays.

In particular, one concept that we hope to discuss and hear your thoughts about is the attached LC 2376 to establish a stable funding source for the Oregon Conservation & Recreation Fund. The OCRF supports local projects across the state that protect our wildlife, landscapes, and outdoor opportunities for all – if interested, additional background can be found in an informational hearing that the House Committee on Natural Resources held on 12/17, [linked here](#).

Thank you for your time, and looking forward to connecting.”

Note: LC 2376 referenced above was later introduced as [House Bill 2600 \(2021\)](#), which “provides revenue from state transient lodging tax to be transferred to Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund.”

- **Lead advocates from Representative Helm’s legislative coalition on transient lodging tax funding for natural resource priorities:**

- a. December 21, 2022 – met with ORLA and Travel Oregon.
- b. January 23, 2023 – met with Metro.
- c. January 30, 2023 – met with Visit McMinnville.
- d. January 30, 2025 – contacted Travel Oregon and received a short memorandum in response on the topic.

- **Representative Helm met with ORLA lobbyist Bill Perry about HB 3159 in February 2023:**

This meeting was recorded in Microsoft Outlook calendar with explicit reference to the meeting purpose being to discuss [House Bill 3159 \(2023\)](#), which “transfers moneys attributable to increase of state transient lodging tax to Recovering Oregon’s Wildlife Fund Subaccount.” This 2023 proposal was the basis for, and includes the same core structure as, the current [House Bill 2977 \(2025\)](#).