

June 25, 2025

Senate Committee on Rules  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301



RE: Oppose House Bill 2977-A

Dear Chair Jama, Vice Chair Bonham, and members of the Senate Committee on Rules:

My name is Eli Matthews and I am the President & CEO of The Chamber of Medford & Jackson County, representing 1,100 businesses in Southern Oregon. I am writing on behalf of the Board of Directors of The Chamber in opposition to HB 2977, which proposes an increase in the statewide Transient Lodging Tax (TLT).

Travel Medford, a department of The Chamber serving as the official Destination Marketing Organization for the City of Medford, successfully collaborates with regional DMOs and Travel Oregon to generate economic activity and new jobs across Oregon. The statewide lodging tax was established with a clear purpose of growing the state's tourism economy through Travel Oregon's focused efforts and marketing the state as a premier travel destination.

Over the last 20 years, visitor spending in Oregon has doubled to \$14 billion and state and local TLT revenues have more than tripled to \$650 million. These figures are leading to consistent growth in spending, earnings, employment and tax revenue.

The TLT funds should be protected to fund investments in tourism, not divert lodging tax revenues to other state agencies and programs unrelated to tourism. Diluting the lodging tax purpose undermines the mechanism designed to fuel Oregon's tourism economy and Travel Oregon has a proven track record of delivering measurable returns on investment from tourism promotion, preserving tourism as a sustainable economic driver.

We urge you to oppose HB 2977 and instead consider alternative measures that support funding Oregon's conservation strategy. The lodging tax should continue to be utilized exclusively for its intended purpose, supporting Travel Oregon.

Sincerely,

Eli Matthews, IOM  
President & CEO  
The Chamber of Medford & Jackson County