



Date: February 9, 2026

Name: Angie Villery, President & CEO, Travel Salem

Bill Number and Committee: HB 4148 – Testimony to the House Committee on Revenue

Dear Chair Nathanson, Vice-Chair Reschke, Vice-Chair Walters, and members of the House Committee on Revenue:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to **HB 4148**.

Travel Salem is a nonprofit organization that serves as the official destination marketing and management organization for Salem and the Marion and Polk Counties region, **representing more than 20 communities, many of them rural**. Without our efforts, many of these communities would have little or no capacity for tourism promotion or visitor awareness.

We recognize that some communities in Oregon are experiencing increased visitation pressures, particularly related to public lands and infrastructure. However, these challenges are **not uniform across the state**. A statewide, **one-size-fits-all approach does not reflect the varied realities of Oregon's communities and risks unintended economic consequences**. **Local lodging tax structures should be evaluated at the community level and adjusted where appropriate, rather than through broad statewide legislation.**

Tourism has become one of Oregon's most important economic drivers as a result of strategic investments made through the Tourism Investment Proposal of 2003, which created Travel Oregon, established a dedicated statewide transient lodging tax, and protected local tourism funding. Today, tourism is Oregon's fourth-largest economic sector.

Local destination marketing organizations and businesses work collaboratively to generate economic activity, create jobs, and support year-round employment by focusing on off-peak and shoulder-season travel. This approach stabilizes the workforce, supports small businesses, and strengthens local economies, particularly in rural areas.

While we understand the many competing demands for state funding, Oregon cannot tax its way to a sustainable economy. The **transient lodging tax was designed to be reinvested in communities to grow local economies and support statewide economic vitality**. Any

proposed increase to this tax should be part of a clear, consistent, and defensible framework that recognizes tourism's role as an economic development engine.

Travel Salem opposes **HB 4148** and respectfully urges a no vote. Visitors are increasingly price sensitive, and additional lodging taxes would negatively impact Oregon's competitiveness as a destination. It is also important to note that many lodging customers are Oregon residents, meaning this tax increase would be borne by Oregonians at a time when cost-of-living pressures are already significant.

Further, increased taxes place added strain on small and independent lodging properties that are already facing rising operational costs. **These pressures could reduce visitation, limit reinvestment, and negatively affect local jobs and communities.**

In 2025, Travel Salem:

- Supported 7,950 jobs
- Welcomed 2.6 million visitors
- Leveraged more than \$2 million in private-sector investment

Opposing **HB 4148** will allow communities and businesses to plan effectively, maintain strategic partnerships, and continue projects that support Oregon's long-term economic health. Again, **Local lodging tax structures should be evaluated at the community level and adjusted where appropriate, rather than through broad statewide legislation.**

Thank you for your consideration and for your service to the people of Oregon.

Sincerely,



Angie Villery, CEO

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