

Submitter: Christie Toal
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4148

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christie Toal, and I am the owner of the compass mcminnville - a boutique inn in McMinnville, Oregon. I am writing to offer testimony in strong opposition to HB 4148 and to underscore how critical destination marketing organizations (DMOs) are to the health of our local economy.

As a fairly new business that relies directly on overnight visitation, I have seen firsthand the measurable impact our local DMO has had on increasing traveler demand to McMinnville and the greater Willamette Valley. The success of our tourism economy is not accidental. It is the result of sustained, strategic investment in promotion, brand-building, and off-season demand generation that individual businesses simply cannot do on their own.

Visitors do not discover McMinnville by chance. They come because of coordinated marketing efforts that highlight our wine industry, culinary scene, outdoor recreation, and small-town character. Those efforts translate directly into overnight stays, dining, retail spending, and jobs. During shoulder and off-peak seasons in particular, DMO-led promotion is often the difference between a viable month and an unsustainable one for local businesses.

Redirecting local lodging tax dollars away from tourism promotion and into general funds would weaken the very system that generates those dollars in the first place. While I understand the budget pressures facing cities and counties, using tourism-generated revenue to fill unrelated gaps risks undermining long-term economic stability, especially in communities like ours that depend on visitor spending.

Local lodging taxes work because they are reinvested in driving demand. When that connection is broken, the return on investment disappears, and the negative effects are felt quickly by workers, small businesses, and the broader community.

I urge you to oppose HB 4148 and to preserve the dedicated use of local lodging tax funds for tourism promotion and destination management. This model has proven effective for McMinnville and the Willamette Valley, and weakening it would have real and lasting consequences.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Christie Toal
Owner, the compass mcminnville
McMinnville, Oregon