



Date: February 9, 2026

Name: Scott Humpert, Explore Sisters

Bill Number & 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,

My name is Scott Humpert, and I am the Executive Director for Explore Sisters, the Destination Management Organization (DMO) representing tourism in Sisters, OR. I appreciate the opportunity to express my opposition to HB 4148.

Previously serving as the Senior Marketing Manager for Explore Lincoln City on the Oregon Coast for more than 10 years, it has been my privilege to serve the Sisters community over the past several years and steward the value that tourism brings to our local economy. Explore Sisters respectfully submits this testimony in strong opposition to HB 4148. This legislation would significantly undercut the effectiveness of tourism as a driver of economic growth, particularly in small communities like ours that rely heavily on visitor spending.

We oppose HB 4148 because this bill was not developed with the established history of broad collaboration and inclusion of statewide DMO's and our industry partners. Honoring the commitments made to the industry in the 2003 and 2016 state Transient Lodging Tax (TLT) processes was absent in bringing HB 4148 to the short session. The result is poor policy and a shortsighted view of Oregon's long term economic health.

The tourism industry remains firmly committed to working as stewards of Oregon's future. Potential changes to TLT statute should be developed in partnership with the industry most directly affected by this tax. The local and regional TLT distributions established in 2003 should be honored and protected. If changes to TLT distributions are merited, they should only be considered on new or future TLT increases, not retroactively altering sacrosanct agreements.

Tourism is a major economic driver for Oregon, providing employment for more than 125,000 residents statewide. We are in a challenging economic climate, and it is essential we do not to divert transient lodging tax revenue away from the very foundation that was originally established to support Oregon's economic recovery.

DMO's are responsible and accountable tourism professionals who generate millions of dollars in positive economic impacts for communities throughout Oregon. Oregon's DMOs do not use Tourism Promotion dollars to market to visitors during peak seasons. Instead, DMOs aim to attract visitors during non-peak travel periods through programs that increase occupancy in slower visitor months and help balance visitor volume across destinations. This strategy helps to even out the seasonality of tourism, ensuring year-round employment and healthy economies for local communities.

Tourism became foundational to Oregon's economy as a result of the Tourism Investment Proposal of 2003. This initiative led to the creation of Travel Oregon, established a dedicated funding source through the statewide TLT, and protected local funding investments in tourism.

During the 2003 recession, the Governor, working closely with the legislature and tourism leaders statewide, recognized tourism as an untapped market. Strategic and sustained investment in tourism was deemed essential by all partners to build Oregon's reputation as a desirable destination for both business and leisure travel.

Collaboration was a key element in this process. Collaboration was also key in 2016, when the statewide TLT was increased to invest in Oregon's hosting of the World Track & Field Championships, further establishing Eugene, Oregon as Track Town USA. This action helped to expand regional tourism investments and competitive grant programs for local communities across the state.

Since 2003, tourism has been essential in sustaining Oregon's workforce, economic viability, and quality of life for residents. Visitor spending in Oregon has more than doubled—from \$6.5 billion in 2003 to \$14.3 billion today. State and local transient lodging tax revenues have more than tripled, rising from \$200 million in 2003 to \$691 million today. Oregon has also experienced steady annual increases in spending, with all growth outpacing inflation.

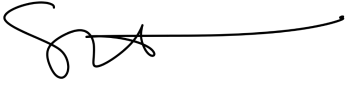
The Regional Cooperative Tourism Program (RCTP), established in 2003, has facilitated numerous partnerships statewide. These collaborations span all seven tourism regions and have led to significant projects and initiatives.

In Sisters, Explore Sisters helped the city achieve Dark Sky Community Certification through DarkSky International, delivers Leave No Trace messaging to our guests promoting sustainable and responsible recreation, and focuses marketing initiatives in our shoulder and off seasons when we need it most. Explore Sisters has heard loud and clear from our community that we need continued support to market Sisters as a destination. For our community, tourism has significant economic impact.

These examples highlight just a few of our many programs and successes. Current statute enables the creation of sustainable marketing and product development programs, which are especially critical for communities transitioning from resource-based economies to those that include tourism management and marketing.

Reducing or eliminating the momentum created by tourism investments would be detrimental to Oregon's long term economic health. Opposing HB 4148 is essential to ensure that tourism destinations and DMOs remain viable. Defeat HB 4148 and help us continue to strategically plan and invest in projects and partnerships that are vital to Oregon's economic future.

Thank you for supporting your tourism constituency as stewards of Oregon's natural wonders, and for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Scott Humpert', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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