

Submitter:	Kris Bennett
On Behalf Of:	
Committee:	House Committee On Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic:	HB4148

As a small business owner that heavily relies on tourism for my area, I oppose those funds going to a general fund. As the past president of the Hermiston Chamber of Commerce, I have personally seen first hand how municipalities try to use those funds (lodging tax funds) for other things or delay using the tourism dollars. Those funds are a vital part of a city/county that normally would not use the funds for tourism. Everyone seems to be a tourism expert and that is the problem. When you put those dollars in a general fund, I can promise you that as city/counties are being forced to shorten every budget...those extra funds will cover expenses that are NOT for tourism. Tourism in my area( Eastern Oregon) relies on visitors, those who live over 50 miles away and come here for a specific reason. In my case it is an event venue, that hosts weddings, celebrations of life and touring our gardens. If my location wasn't located on the EOVA trail map, listed in Travel Oregon or shared with local chamber of commerce it would be more difficult to find me. We constantly have visitors from out of the area, the last one was from North Carolina, who shared our gardens with his 250,000 viewers. We have people wanting to come and see the gardens because of that. These people now will put funds into our local economy. Travelers stay in hotels, ( that are empty on weekends), eat local food, and buy local fuel and groceries.

I strongly oppose the change you are requesting.