

Submitter: Scott Steward
On Behalf Of: Florence Area Chamber of Commerce
Committee: House Committee On Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4148

Oregon legislators are again targeting changes to the Transient Lodging Tax (TLT) during the upcoming short session—putting tourism promotion and economic development at risk.

Passing HB 4148 would be a historic blunder and a b****slap in the face for one of Oregon's most reliable sources of income--tourism.

Legislators, show us your integrity. Don't keep piling up revenue for random use. Leave TLT alone. My client, the Florence Area Chamber of Commerce, and I, as well as the Oregon State Chamber of Commerce, strongly oppose HB 4148, HB 4134, and SB 1562, which would divert TLT dollars away from their intended (and in most cases, legally required) use, along with renewed efforts to weaken Oregon's Liability Waiver Standards impacting recreation businesses.

*Tourism in Florence accounts for roughly half of all people employed in the town. Please join me in fighting to preserve their livelihoods.

*Hospitality and leisure is Oregon's third largest private employer sector, creating more than 200,000 jobs,? generating \$14 billion in annual economic activity, driven in part by state and local lodging taxes

*Transient Lodging Taxes (TLT) are a vital economic tool, in place since 2003, agreed upon by legislators and lodging operators. The current system drives tourism business growth, generating more economic activity and revenue than the tax itself.

*\$260 million in TLT reinvestment annually drives \$14 billion in economic activity, delivering an outstanding ROI for policymakers and Oregonians.

*Preserving the current formula for TLT distribution means creating jobs across Oregon, not only in the hospitality and tourism industries but also in retail, agriculture, and transportation.

*TLT collected from guests funds tourism promotion and infrastructure, and supports local government budgets.? More tourism promotion and infrastructure lead to higher TLT collections, benefiting local budgets.

*Fewer promotion and infrastructure resources may weaken the industry enough to endanger the jobs of 200,000 Oregonians.