

March 9, 2026

RE: HB 4148 Opposition

Chair Nathanson and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify.

My name is Soraida Cross. I am testifying in my personal capacity. I operate the Hotel Salem, and have worked in the Oregon hospitality industry for 30 years, including 20 years at locally owned VIP's Industries. I'm here today to oppose House Bill 4148 because of what it would mean for my business — and more importantly, for my employees.

In my hotel, visitor demand directly determines whether my staff gets steady hours, year-round employment, and opportunities to advance. When rooms are full, housekeepers get more shifts, front desk staff have stable schedules, and managers can plan ahead. When demand drops, it's my employees who feel it first.

Local lodging taxes were created to keep that demand coming. Visitor dollars are reinvested into marketing, events, and facilities that attract travelers. That reinvestment works. It brings people to our communities, supports small businesses, and sustains more than 200,000 hospitality workers across Oregon.

HB 4148 would divert those visitor dollars away from tourism and economic development. From my perspective as an operator, that means fewer guests, fewer bookings, and less revenue — which ultimately means fewer hours and less stability for the people I employ.

Oregon's local lodging tax system has worked for more than 20 years. It has created a reliable framework that allows local governments and the hospitality industry to work together to grow local economies. Hotels alone generate more than \$220 million annually in local lodging taxes.

Tourism investment is not just promotion—it's a jobs strategy. Off-season marketing helps boost the low times of our business. Reinvesting visitor dollars strengthens local economies and reduces pressure on general funds.

We are aware of the disparity in how these dollars are allocated across communities. ORLA's CEO has already addressed these issues today, including the need for transparency and a workable compromise. I support that approach.

I am urging you to NOT pass a bill that weakens tourism investment altogether.

When we pull back on driving visitor demand, it doesn't just hurt hotels — it hurts workers, small businesses, and local governments who depend on a healthy tourism economy.

Please oppose HB 4148 and protect the visitor investments that keep Oregon's hospitality workforce working.

Thank you for your time.