Chair Nathanson, members of the committee, my name is Hannah Buschert, I am a third generation, small business hotelier in Cannon Beach and I am here in opposition of HB 4148.

Thank you for taking my testimony on Monday, February 9, 2026, here is my completed testimony regarding this House Bill.

I am asking you to protect my industry and my customers from the excessive tax burden jurisdictions have placed on my customers by taxing them relentlessly rather than appealing to those who elected them. Just this year Clatsop County has implemented a 2% increase to the Transient Lodging Tax (TLT), because they refuse to go to the voters for a minimal property tax increase. As they can only realize 30% of funds for general fund purposes, this means that 70% is sitting around, waiting to see if this house bill passes. To reiterate: taxes were intentionally collected from Oregonians and visitors to Oregon with no plan to use them. I believe this should be illegal. The Clatsop County commissioners have left the emergency services underfunded trying to change laws, rather than secure them the funding they need.

Regarding some of the testimony that was submitted on Monday, February 9: there were several elected officials who noted that 70% of TLT is to be used solely for promotion of tourism, this is not accurate. ORS 320.350 allows for these funds to be used for tourism promotion, programming, and tourism facilities, as I am sure you are aware. In Cannon Beach, these funds are used for events, our visitor information center, and grants for our non-profit organizations, history museum, and lifeguard towers, among other uses. To claim that restricted funds must solely be used for promotion is disingenuous. If this is the case in their communities, they should work towards being more creative with its use. Cannon Beach's Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) receives only 7% of total TLT collections and uses these funds to operate the visitor information center and marketing, which is a boon for small businesses.

The submitted opposition testimonies make one thing clear: many of us feel that we cannot trust our local governments to be respectful and responsible with taxes. I agree and would like to share a brief story about my experience with local government.

The City of Cannon Beach has fought to build a new city hall. It had been put on the ballot before and always failed. Our current city manager decided to fund the venture

by increasing the TLT by 1.5% to chase the 30% of unrestricted funds, which created an excess of the restricted funds. To waste these funds, he convinced the city council to transform a derelict piece of property located in the tsunami hazard zone, into an event center. After 70 meetings and no vote of the public as to whether we even wanted the facility, which would have caused further congestion and a whole host of issues, a $14 million facility was set to break ground.

I, and other concerned community members, attempted a referendum, but because this used the TLT, we had no legal ground to do so, so we had to file suit with our city for a vote. And in a vote of the people, this project failed because it was misguided, excessive, and not what the community wanted. The moral of my story is that giving cities and counties this blank check to raise TLT whenever they want with no checks and balances spits in the face of our democracy and a citizen's right to have a say.

I wish I could say that I trust my elected officials and they will do the right thing, but the reality is that I cannot. Tourism makes us happier, smarter, and more caring, we should not be vilifying visitors and governments should not be trying to figure out how they can cash in.

If ORS 320.350 needs modifying, it is not this. This will only embolden local governments to sidestep the democratic process and reduce citizen's rights, while taking advantage of businesses and customers, like mine.

Thank you for your time and consideration