



Clatsop County

Board of Commissioners

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February 11, 2026

House Committee on Revenue
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support HB 4148 – Ensuring Sustainable Tourism and Community Safety

Chair Nathanson, Vice-Chairs Reschke and Walters, and Members of the Committee,

The Clatsop County Board of Commissioners strongly urges your support for House Bill 4148 as a responsible and balanced approach to addressing the true cost of hosting millions of visitors across Oregon each year.

Tourism is vital to Oregon's coastal economy, supporting local jobs, small businesses, and community vitality. At the same time, the visitors who drive this economic activity also rely on local public safety services, transportation systems, and emergency response infrastructure to stay safe while they recreate. These essential services are funded primarily by local property taxes, leaving a growing imbalance between tourism impacts and available funding.

HIGH TOURISM COUNTIES AND DEMANDS ON PUBLIC SAFETY

In Clatsop County, where the year-round population is about 41,000, the number of people in the community can swell to more than 120,000 during peak tourism months.¹ State data reinforces this reality. Between 2021 and 2024, Clatsop County had an average daily overnight visitor share equal to 23% of the resident population, the second highest in the state, just behind Lincoln County.² Tillamook and Curry counties followed closely.

¹ Dyke, Andrew, et al. "Clatsop County Analysis of the Fiscal Impacts of Tourism." ECONorthwest. (2023)

² Dean Runyan Associates. "The Economic Impact of Travel in Oregon: Calendar Year 2024 Preliminary." Travel Oregon. (2025)

Overnight-Visitor Day Share of Resident Pop.³					
County	2021	2022	2023	2024	Average
Lincoln County	28%	27%	25%	27%	26.8%
Clatsop County	24%	23%	24%	23%	23.4%
Tillamook County	20%	23%	25%	24%	23.0%
Curry County	20%	22%	24%	25%	22.7%
Jefferson County	13%	17%	16%	18%	16.0%
Wheeler County	14%	16%	16%	16%	15.6%

These data highlight the communities most affected by a disproportionately large influx of visitors each year.

These seasonal surges place enormous pressure on already stretched public safety services and emergency response systems. Between 2019 and 2024, visitors in Clatsop County accounted for roughly one-third of all jail bookings, arrests, and tickets, and approximately 15% of crime victims. Our eleven volunteer-supported fire agencies also serve both residents and tens of thousands of tourists despite aging infrastructure, staffing shortages, and limited resources. Yet, when a tourist calls 9-1-1, they expect someone to respond. HB 4148 helps ensure that we can.

TOURISM IMPACTS ARE NOT MATCHED BY OTHER TAX STRUCTURES

Claims that visitors already “pay their share” through other taxes do not reflect how local services are actually funded. Income taxes go entirely to the state. Gas tax revenue dedicated to counties is distributed by residency, and for cities it is distributed by population, not by visitor use of local roads and infrastructure. Local transient lodging taxes (TLTs), however, provide a direct link to tourism, ensuring that residents are not left to shoulder tourism-driven impacts through property taxes.

REALIGNING LOCAL TLTS WITH THEIR ORIGINAL PURPOSE

Before the change in 2003, local TLTs in Oregon served as flexible tools for local governments to meet community needs. The 70/30 mandate (ORS 320.350) was the fundamental policy shift, and it left cities and counties facing rising public safety and infrastructure demands without the financial tools needed to keep pace. HB 4148 restores balance by recognizing that safe communities, functioning infrastructure, and reliable emergency services are foundational to a healthy tourism economy.

³ Overnight-Visitor Day Share of Resident Population is equal to the annual overnight visitor days divided by 365 divided by the resident population.

This past year, Clatsop County reached a crossroads. We could no longer afford to continue subsidizing the impacts of tourism with our already stretched General Fund. In the absence of legislative action last session, the County was left with the option of increasing its countywide TLT rate to sustain critical public safety services. This was not our preferred approach and the ordinance was structured intentionally to allow rate reductions if state law is amended to permit more flexible use of existing TLT revenue. Our priority remains a legislative solution that allows communities to address tourism-driven impacts without continuing to rely on rate increases.

During Monday's hearing on HB 4148, representatives from the tourism industry described a concept they are developing as a proposed amendment. While well-intentioned, the approach would add significant complexity to an already complicated system of funding distribution rules tied to the timing of local TLT rate changes. Cities and counties would face the difficult task of implementing and maintaining another, overlapping formula for a single tax. HB 4148, in contrast, provides a clear and workable path forward without adding layers of administrative burden.

HB 4148: A PATH TO SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND SAFETY

When emergency response systems are overstretched, everyone is affected, both visitors and residents. Investing in safe, responsive communities strengthens the foundation of Oregon's tourism economy and protects the visitor experience we all seek to sustain.

HB 4148 provides a balanced and practical solution by giving cities and counties the flexibility to reinvest a portion of tourism-generated revenue into public safety and infrastructure when needed, while preserving strong support for tourism promotion and related facilities. It recognizes that local leaders are best positioned to make these funding decisions, balancing the needs of tourism promotion with the core services that make safe, functional communities possible.

Claims that this bill will harm tourism miss a critical reality: marketing alone cannot sustain tourism if visitors do not feel safe or well-served. Communities across Oregon have been working toward consensus for years and cannot afford indefinite delay. HB 4148 reflects good-faith efforts to find middle ground and provides a responsible path forward that strengthens both community stability and the long-term sustainability of Oregon's tourism economy.

We respectfully urge your YES vote on HB 4148 to ensure that communities can continue to welcome visitors safely and responsibly.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Mark Kujala, Chair
District 1



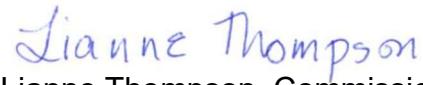
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