

Submitter:

Erin Moore

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB4148

Members of the House Committee on Revenue,

I strongly support HB 4148, which would allow a larger portion of lodging tax revenue to be utilized by cities and counties for investments into vital infrastructure and programs that are in great need of investment, and largely due to the use of these infrastructures and programs by tourists. As a member of a city (Astoria) and area (North Coast of Oregon) that have very high levels of tourism, I see the need for more funding in order to continue to support these important services in our communities that are currently overtaxed by use from a massive influx of tourists each tourist season, and throughout the year.

As an example, firefighters or police will help with any need, whether the caller is a resident or a tourist; I know in many local communities nearby, these are very underfunded and find themselves overtaxed by their serving of tourists, with no ability to bring in more money than is allotted to them by their city or county or region - this money that is allotted is I'm sure based on the population of the community residents, and does not take into account the population of a community when at its highest level of tourism. Lodging tax dollars could help support these vital services for all the people of the communities, whether residents or tourists.

As another example, roads and bridges and all the infrastructure of transportation are used heavily by tourists, but the funding is not based on this level of tourism.

Highway 26 has had its giant, dangerous bump near milepost 13 for over a year, with no end in sight - this highway is used heavily by tourists and could use more funding from the lodging tax. There are many more examples of roads that are desperately needing fixed in our high tourism areas, that could be helped greatly by a greater portion of lodging tax dollars.

I have heard that while these lodging taxes have been being collected and spent mainly on advertising, there is currently a very large amount of money that is set aside that could use an avenue to get it into communities in order to support tourism. Perhaps I've heard wrong, but either way, I think we could use a little more looseness around the provisioning of these funds and realize that communities need more money in order to support their tourism, especially as international travel seems to be reducing, with people traveling closer to home in order to save money and feel safer. If roads fail, and police & firefighters can't respond to calls because they are overloaded with residents' and tourists' use, then our tourism will in turn fail, and so many thriving communities in Oregon will suffer greatly. Surely a balance between tourism advertising and tourism infrastructure support within communities can be reached. We needn't have it be so black & white - let's allow these lodging tax dollars to promote and support tourism in all of its forms and needs. Advertising is great, but if people arrive to underfunded cities and regions, no amount of advertising will turn

that lessening attraction around. Let's support high tourism cities and regions and allow these very important tourism dollars to continue to be spent there now and into the future, so we can keep communities thriving and economically sound.

Thank you and PLEASE SUPPORT HB 4148 so we can continue our thriving Oregon tourism industry in vital communities,

Erin Moore