



Eastern Oregon Visitors Association  
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February 11, 2026

**Bill Number and Committee:** HB 4148, Testimony to the House Committee on Revenue

Dear Chair Nathanson, Vice-Chair Reschke, Vice-Chair Walters, and members of the House Committee on Revenue:

I serve as the Executive Director of the Eastern Oregon Visitors Association (EOVA), a regional Destination Marketing and Management Organization (RDMO), serving eleven counties and two Tribal governments east of the Cascades.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide both in-person and written testimony.

Representing Eastern Oregon and our tourism partners, I respectfully oppose HB 4148 and ask that you pause this effort and bring destination organizations, lodging partners, and local governments together to find a more thoughtful, sustainable solution.

Eastern Oregon spans more than **42,000 square miles**, is home to **fewer than 200,000 people**, and is nearly **60% public lands**.

Those numbers are not just geography — they define our economy.

We do not have dense population centers or large commercial tax bases. Tourism is not a luxury for us. It is one of the few reliable ways we bring new dollars into our communities.

Across all eleven counties, our entire region generates about **\$8.5 million annually in local lodging tax revenue** — roughly what a single city elsewhere in the state might collect on its own. And nearly 80% of that comes from just a handful of communities.

So when percentages shift, even slightly, the impact for rural Oregon isn't marginal — it's significant.

**The core concern with HB 4148 is that it lowers the required percentage dedicated to tourism promotion and related uses, removing the guardrails that have historically protected those funds.**

While current leaders may say they would not redirect tourism dollars, those are assurances — not guarantees. City councils change. County commissions change. Priorities change.

Without stronger safeguards, the intent behind these dollars will inevitably erode over time, creating long-term instability for the very organizations responsible for generating the visitor demand that funds this system in the first place.

And that demand matters.

**This bill assumes lodging tax collections are up and therefore there is more to redistribute. But those increases are largely driven by inflation — not stronger occupancy or healthier margins. In many communities, demand is flat or softening while costs continue to rise.**

Reducing investment in promotion now will only weaken visitation, shrinking the revenue stream this bill aims to reallocate.

**Simply put: if you reduce the engine that drives visitors, you reduce the dollars available for everything else.**

It's also important to clarify that tourism dollars are not just "marketing dollars."

**Tourism infrastructure is community infrastructure.**

These funds already support things that residents enjoy and utilize — trailheads, public restrooms, main street beautification, signage, wayfinding, and visitor services. In one eastern Oregon community, **37.5% of lodging tax revenue is going towards debt services of related infrastructure**; in other communities, a portion of lodging tax revenue is already allocated for **search and rescue operations**, because visitor use directly impacts those needs. In other words, these dollars already help offset the real public costs of welcoming visitors and improve overall livability for residents.

Tourism revenue uplifts entire communities — not just visitors.

In many of our towns, the organizations managing this work are extremely small. Most of our DMOs also serve as the Chamber of Commerce. They are one- or two-person teams handling business support, events, visitor services, and marketing all at once.

**Further diverting TLT away from these organizations doesn't just reduce advertising — it reduces local capacity, small business support, and the ability for communities to tell their own story.**

It also erodes local voice. Effective tourism management requires people on the ground who understand seasonality, sensitivities, and community priorities. A one-size-fits-all statewide shift risks disconnecting decisions from the places most affected.

This is not just about tourism promotion.

It's about economic resilience for rural Oregon.

It's about whether small communities have the tools to sustain themselves.

We share the same goal: thriving communities and a strong statewide economy. But HB 4148 is not the right path.

I respectfully ask that you pause this bill, convene stakeholders during the interim, and work collaboratively toward a solution that protects both local needs and the visitor economy.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration, and I respectfully ask for a **NO vote on HB 4148**.

Sincerely,



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Executive Director

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