

E mail testimony from McBride, Mike <Mike.McBride@travelocity.com>

I'm Travelocity's market manager in Oregon. I manage the contracts and relationships that Travelocity has with Oregon hoteliers and CVBs, and we pride ourselves in having very good working relationships here!

It's my goal to help put much-needed "heads in beds" and to strengthen Oregon's tourism industry. Online travel companies such as Travelocity are able to do this in a tailored way to an enormous and attentive audience through our superior technology and global reach. We also level the playing field so that independent, Oregon-owned small business hotels can compete with national chains for these valuable customers' attention. Independent hotels, particularly those in small towns & counties like we have here in much of Oregon, depend on online travel companies to raise awareness of, and bring guests to, their properties because they don't have the marketing dollars, or the benefit of a relationship with a major national or international franchise that can provide marketing assistance.

That's why I find it difficult to understand that, rather than working with folks like me and the rest of the online travel industry to promote Oregon as a destination, and to fill its often undersubscribed hotels during an economic downturn, some are instead seeking to expand hotel taxes.

House Bill 2656 would expand hotel taxes to cover travel service fees, including the fees that Travelocity and other online and brick and mortar travel service providers charge for their booking services. These travel service fees are not subject to bed tax under current law. This new tax would make it more expensive for travelers to come to Oregon, and more expensive for companies like mine to promote tourism and travel within the state.

I understand the House Revenue committee is considering this bill on Wednesday morning, March 6. I urge you to reject the new tax proposed in HB 2656, and look forward to continuing to help drive visitors to our state for years to come!

Thank you for your consideration, and very sincerest regards,

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