



February 6, 2015

The Honorable Mark Hass, Chair  
Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue  
900 Court Street NE, S-207  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chairman Hass and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to you today to support the swift passage of Senate Bill 64. This bill will keep the job-creating Oregon Convention Center Hotel project on track and clear away any doubt that it can finally move to completion.

The tourism industry is too important to the state to have the Convention Center Hotel project remain in limbo.

*Value of tourism in Oregon*

- Tourism is a \$9.6 billion/per year industry in Oregon, employing 93,000 people.
- It is an important industry across the entire state, as tourism jobs make up a larger share of employment in Oregon's rural counties (~3% of jobs in urban areas, ~6% in rural areas).
- Revenue generated from tourism jobs allows the state to invest in other important services, like education and public safety.

*The Convention Center Hotel project*

- In 2014, the economic impact of the OCC totaled \$516.6 million and supported 5,000 full- and part-time jobs.
- The Convention Center Hotel will attract between five and ten new, large conventions each year.
- Convention-goers, on average, spend \$330/day in hotels, restaurants, and shopping.
- The project will support 2,000 construction jobs and more than 900 permanent hospitality and induced jobs.
- The project is critical for Oregon's ability to attract other major events, like the NBA All-star Game or the NCAA Final Four.

Every month we delay getting this hotel project completed we lose additional convention groups and the spending these groups would bring to Oregon.

Senate Bill 64 simply clarifies that Metro's charter is the source of authority for issuing revenue bonds to be repaid by visitor taxes. I urge you to support the swift passage of SB 64 and make the most of Oregon's investment in our tourism industry.

Ashforth has supported this project from its inception and we will continue to do so.

Thank you for your leadership and attention to this issue.

Sincerely,

Henry A. Ashforth, III  
Executive Vice President, The Ashforth Company  
Chairman, Lloyd Enhanced Services District (ESD)