



From the Desk of
Representative
Andy Olson

DATE: February 17, 2016
TO: Tourism and Legislative partners throughout the region and state
FROM: Willamette Valley Visitors Association (WVVA)
SUBJECT: Expressed Concerns to the HB 4146-A Amended Changes

On behalf of the Willamette Valley Visitors Association (WVVA), we feel obligated to express our concerns to HB 4146-A in its current form. While we as an association are receptive to potential changes in the state transient lodging tax (TLT), the current amended proposal raises considerable concern for the following reasons.

The WVVA Board of Directors has taken a neutral stand to the original House Bill 4146 proposal to raise the statewide TLT by 1%, and implementing a complete 15% funding to the regional cooperative tourism program. We are concerned by the proposed interim work group to study the distribution of revenue within the program as presented in HB 4146-A, feeling the matters of needed change are already being adequately addressed in the original drafted HB 4146.

An interim Legislative Work Group is not needed to re-evaluate the regional cooperative marketing program (RCMP). It will introduce unnecessary instability and uncertainty to the program, potentially harming and eroding the efforts and headway gained over the course of the last decade. The annual tourism plans for each of the state's seven regions are currently developed via a collaborative process that includes tourism partners within the region. The RCMP provides a framework for tourism partners to work together to promote the region as a whole. Those collaborative efforts offer many local partners access to larger markets, publications, travel influencers and promotions then they would otherwise be able to reach on their own.

The RCMP program is just a small portion of the state TLT and its operations and funding as administered through Travel Oregon are transparent. Travel Oregon has maintained a scheduled and timely distribution of the RCMP funds back to the regions for the past decade. In short, the RCMP is a proven collaborative approach to regional promotion. The system isn't broke and it doesn't need fixing through the efforts of a work group.

The Willamette Valley Visitors Association thanks you for consideration to our expressed concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jimmie Lucht", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jimmie Lucht
President, Willamette Valley Visitors Association