



March 22, 2017

House Committee on Economic Development and Trade
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: House Bill 2744 and HB 2768: Amending local transient lodging tax definitions.

Dear Chair Lininger, Vice-Chair Marsh, Vice-Chair Smith, and members of the Committee on Economic Development and Trade:

I'm writing today to express Beaverton's support for HB 2744 and HB 2768. Tourism has become a focal point in Beaverton's economy and these bills will help ensure we can focus our transient lodging tax dollars in the most effective ways to make the city a hub for art, culture, and recreation. Beaverton recently enacted a 4% transient lodging tax aimed at supporting our Center for the Arts, a 450-seat center for professional theater, dance, live music, and arts education, located in the Creekside District, that will attract and increase regional visitors into the community.

Having the flexibility to target our transient lodging tax revenue on tourism investments beyond marketing will ensure we have the regionally-attracting facilities and programs to expand Beaverton's robust arts, culture, and events programs that attract thousands of visitors each year. With the completion of the Center for the Arts, the city expects to draw thousands more.

HB 2744 would revise the definition of a tourism-related facility by removing the requirement that improvements have a useful life of 10 years and instead generally cover improvements and maintenance to real property that have a substantial purpose to support, promote or accommodate tourism.

HB 2768 would expand the definition of tourism promotion to cover more than marketing expenses. Instead, tourism promotion would include expenses for tourism activities, tourism-generating special events, sporting events and festivals. Public safety costs for such events are intended to be covered. In addition, the bill would cover expenses for developing or improving the visitor industry by enhancing tourist attractions, tourism-related facilities and special events. This change would include beautification projects, sidewalk improvements, benches, parking facilities, and restrooms.

I urge you to support HB 2744 and HB 2768 as it will provide the resources necessary to expand Beaverton's reach in tourism. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerley,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patrick O'Claire". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Patrick O'Claire
Finance Director