



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

March 21, 2017

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House Committee on Economic Development and Trade  
Representative Ann Lininger, Chair  
900 Court Street NE, Room 453, Salem, Oregon 97301

### **RE: Support for HB 2744**

Chair Lininger and Committee Members:

The City of Bend asks this Committee to recommend approval of HB 2744, that bill has two main provisions: 1) it removes a sentence in ORS 320.300 that is specifically aimed at the City of Bend based on a situation that existed 14 years ago and is no longer relevant; and 2) clarifies the definition of tourist-related facilities to make it clear that facilities that serve tourism can be funded with tourism dollars. Improving facilities that that serve tourism will attract tourism activity and increase the total number of overnight stays.

The City of Bend has upheld its commitment to tourism promotion. Since 2003, the Tourism Fund in Bend has allocated millions of dollars to tourism promotion. In 2003 when the state law was passed the City was allocating just \$640,000 to tourism promotion. This year in 2016-17, the City will allocate over \$3.2M to tourism promotion. We have magnificent results to show that this investment in tourism promotion achieved its purpose. We have achieved the intended goal of ORS 320.300.

The citizens of Bend repeatedly ask the City Council to limit its expenditures on tourism promotion and focus on other areas of greater need. Removal of this sentence in ORS 320.300 will allow the City of Bend to respond to the requests of its citizens and hold the City of Bend to the same standard that every unit of local government is held to in ORS 320.300 rather than be subject to restrictions to which no other local government is subject.

Our commitment to tourism and specifically to tourism promotion will not be diminished by this change. The City Council views tourism as a pillar of the

City's economic success. The maturation of our outdoor industry and the creation of the Oregon Outdoor Association alongside our much acclaimed entrepreneurship and the success of the Bend Venture Conference are proof that our success in promoting our natural amenities and high quality of life is the foundation for the new economy.

Clarifying what constitutes tourism-related facilities will further the promotion of tourism in the City of Bend. In a city where tourists visit to ski, mountain bike, attend Art on the High Desert and FFA competitions, tourist-related facilities are not just convention centers and similar facilities, but a broader set of facilities that often don't have a roof, seats or ticket sales. We have vistas, bike lanes, and acres and acres of meadows and fields. The definition of tourist-related facility should reflect the tourism attractions across the entire state, not just those in a select few jurisdictions.

The City of Bend is a shining example of the vision that the Legislature had in 2003. Lodging taxes were intended to build great tourism amenities and support the economic evolution of Oregon cities. That has happened in Bend. The proposed changes in HB 2744 will allow that to continue to happen in Bend.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carolyn Eagan". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Carolyn Eagan  
Economic Development Director