



March 20, 2020

Special Joint Committee on Coronavirus Response
900 Court St., N.E.
Salem OR 97301

Dear Senator Roblan and Representative Holvey,

Thank you for serving as co-chairs of Oregon's Special Joint Committee on Coronavirus Response. As the Committee works to protect Oregonians from the health and economic impacts of COVID-19, we respectfully request particular attention be given to supporting Oregon's travel sector.

Travel and tourism are among Oregon's most important economic engines and have been uniquely devastated by this pandemic. Restaurants and lodging represent about 5% of the Oregon economy, the largest single sector behind healthcare. This includes around 200,000 jobs at an estimated 12,500 locations across Oregon. We urge you to consider targeted tax relief to help ensure Oregon's travel and tourism communities can survive this crisis—including working to ensure hotels, motels, short-term rental operators, and travel platforms like Expedia Group can continue to connect travelers with Oregon's vast and diverse travel and tourism communities.

In response to government health and travel advisories around the world over the last two weeks, Expedia Group has seen a drastic decrease in bookings and similarly dire increase in cancellations, impacting millions of travelers and businesses—including Oregon's hoteliers, tour guides, vacation rental owners, attractions, and more.

To help this travel ecosystem during this moment of unprecedented constraint, we request the Committee recommend the Department of Revenue **allow lodging providers and intermediaries (platforms that help connect and book travel, like Expedia Group), defer remittance of sales and transient lodging taxes for at least six months.** Deferring these payments for a limited time would help Expedia Group continue to assist travelers and supply partners, process often critical refunds for travelers, and maintain a workforce. Lodging providers, whether a hotel, motel, or one of the many Oregon families who rely on vacation rental income—are also in critical need of this flexibility.

As Oregon law requires TLT revenue to be spent on tourism promotion, deferred remittance of TLTs can help build a safety net for Oregon's struggling tourism workforce without reducing the amount of state funds available for emergency response to the COVID-19 crisis, while protecting the budget for tourism promotion when Oregon is once again able to welcome travelers.

Thank you very much for your service to the people of Oregon. Our thoughts are with you and your families as you help lead Oregon communities through this crisis, and we are grateful for your consideration of the above request. Please contact me at rilazaro@expediagroup.com or 206-660-8227 with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard de Sam Lazaro'.

Richard de Sam Lazaro
NW Government Relations, Expedia Group

