



June 22, 2020

Dear Joint Interim Committee on the First Special Session of 2020
Co-Chair Courtney, Co-Chair Kotek, Co-Vice Chair Girod, Co-Vice Chair Drazan,

On behalf of Oregon's tourism industry, I am writing to ask for your support of HB 4047 State Transient Lodging Tax which would lift the sunset on the state transient lodging tax (TLT) and maintain the current level of investment in Oregon's tourism industry.

Oregon's statewide lodging tax is currently collected at a rate of 1.8% with a reduction in the rate scheduled to take effect as of July 1, 2020 to a permanent rate of 1.5%. I ask you to support the lift of the sunset especially in light of the COVID-19 Pandemic. These funds are critical to the COVID-19 recovery of our tourism industry.

Travel Oregon recently awarded \$800,225 to local Oregon tourism businesses to support job retention and stabilizations – keeping the tax rate at 1.8% allows the agency to continue supporting these local, small tourism businesses through COVID-19 recovery.

As a leader in one of the seven Regional Destination Marketing Organizations (RDMOs), I am urging you to lift the sunset and maintain the statewide TLT at 1.8%. The success of the programs administered by Travel Oregon through revenue generated from this tax have been critical to our region's success in growing jobs and increased economic activity for our community.

In Southern Oregon the state program has supported our ability to fund a regional wildfire smoke monitoring system, four rural tourism programs in our rural communities, wine industry support, marketing for regional rodeos, customer service workshops, Canada sales missions and off-season marketing efforts to increase out of state visitation.

Again, we urge your support of the HB 4047 transient lodging tax to keep the current statewide lodging tax rate at 1.8%, a decision that will ultimately support continued economic growth and development in every region of Oregon. Please don't hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance.

All the best,

Brad Niva
Executive Director
Travel Southern Oregon
Brad@SouthernOregon.org

541-287-3047