



Monday, June 22, 2020

Joint Interim Committee on the First Special Session of 2020

JISS.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov

Re: Support to keep State Transient Lodging Tax Rate at 1.8%

Dear Co-Chair Courtney, Co-Chair Kotek, Co-Vice Chair Girod, Co-Vice Chair Drazan,

On behalf of Oregon's coastal tourism region, I implore you to remove the sunset on the state transient lodging tax (TLT) and keep the tax rate at 1.8%. As you already know, COVID-19 has had a devastating effect on our industry making it more important than ever to remove the sunset.

This additional resource has provided funds for multiple Oregon coast projects and investments. In turn, this has generated incredible enthusiasm around this work as it supports not only coastal communities and their economies, but also provides resources for local non-profits and other government agencies. These funds have allowed us to:

- Award just over \$300K in grants to many dozens of entities from Brookings to Astoria which were community identified and driven priorities.
- Meaningfully partner with public safety, search and rescue agencies to keep both visitors and coastal residents safer.
- Strengthen relationships with and between local, state and federal natural resource management partners seeking to better steward our public resources.
- Benefit small farmers via our food and farm trail programs by offering technical assistance, marketing consultation and ultimately driving money and profitability to small producers; which contributes to local food security for coastal residents.
- Increase coastal livability overall by investing in regional trails which coastal residents also use. This addresses the "health and wellness" initiatives by many county governments including Clatsop and Tillamook.

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While we have bragging rights regarding the 2.1 Billion dollars our industry contributes to the coastal economy, it's not all about the money. These livelihoods are enhanced by greater community livability regarding public safety, resource stewardship, food security, as well as public health and wellness.

In addition to the success of our coastal program, 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 job and increasing economic activity, and livability for our coastal communities. Together we continue to fulfill Travel Oregon's vision statement to create "*A better life for all Oregonians through strong, sustainable local communities that welcome a diversity of explorers.*"

As the Director of the Regional Destination Management Organization (RDMO) for our coastal region, I am urging you to lift the sunset and maintain the statewide TLT at 1.8%. The rebuilding of Oregon's tourism economy will be redefined by supporting local businesses. As we begin to rebuild the industry, Oregonians must come together to reopen in a smart way that supports the stabilization and growth of the Oregon businesses that employ and support local families and communities first. This decision will ultimately support continued economic growth and development of every region of Oregon as we rebuild the economy from the impacts of COVID-19.

I welcome any direct inquiries if further explanation or details are necessary for your deliberations.

Sincerely,



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