

June 23, 2020

Joint Interim Committee

Re: Support State Transient Lodging Tax Remaining at 1.8%

Chairs Courtney and Koteck, vice-chairs Girod and Drazen and committee members:

Please support removing the sunset provision from the State Transient Lodging Tax so that it remains at 1.8%. COVID-19 has dramatically altered the travel landscape and industry experts are predicting it will require three to four years to return to pre-pandemic travel volumes. The important marketing efforts coordinated by Travel Oregon are needed more than ever. Pivoting to assist travel and hospitality businesses to address the effects of the pandemic, Travel Oregon recently awarded more than \$800,000 to small businesses around the state.

Oregon's destination marketing organizations benefit from grants through Travel Oregon and the Regional Cooperative Tourism Grant Programs led by Travel Oregon. Past Regional Cooperative Tourism Program (RCTP) and Competitive Grants Programs led by Travel Oregon have assisted programs in Lane County. A few of recent grants include:

- McKenzie River corridor wayfinding project – Recently funded through the Willamette Valley Visitors Association, these funds will provide wayfinding signage throughout the McKenzie River corridor.
- Travel Oregon studio grants – Projects include the East Lane County Bicycle Tourism Studio (Connect Lane), the South Willamette Valley Culinary and Agritourism Studio (South Willamette Valley Food Trail) and the Central Coast Culinary and Agritourism Studio (Central Coast Food Trail).
- Oregon Dunes Restoration Collaborative (ODRC) – Travel Oregon granted funding for the development of a website and collateral materials used to launch the ODRC's dunes restoration efforts in 2018.
- Large grant funding to support the hosting of Oregon21 at the reconstructed, privately funded, world-class Hayward Field. Both the hosting of the World Athletics Championships and the gift of an extraordinary facility in which to host it, are once in a generation (or more) opportunities for Oregon and Eugene-Springfield. Hayward Field will host major events well into our future, securing visitor spending, civic pride and inspiration for Oregonians of all ages.

Travel Oregon and RCTP grants support local communities throughout the state. These funds help us develop our destination and new tourism assets, expand the visitor industry and improve local livability for residents and those who visit.

HB 4047 passed in a decisive house vote earlier this year and went to the senate where it received support. The ability to complete the necessary senate vote, and pass the bill onto the Governor, was interrupted during the short session. The opportunity to pass this legislation is now available and we urge support of HB4047 to keep the current statewide lodging tax rate at 1.8%. This decision will ultimately support continued economic growth and development in Lane county and throughout Oregon. Please don't hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,



Kari Westlund
President/CEO
Travel Lane County
Kari@EugeneCascadesCoast.org
541.743.8750



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TRAVEL LANE COUNTY

