



The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 99-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

March 19, 2019

To: Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue
Senator Mark Haas, Chair

Re: **SB 595** – Allows use of some local transient lodging tax to fund affordable workforce housing – **Support**

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that government at all levels must make available sufficient funds for housing-assistance programs. In addition, government at all levels should develop policies that will assure sufficient land at reasonable cost on which to develop housing and that will assure fulfillment of other goals, such as access to employment, preservation of open space, environmental cleanliness and beauty and other aspects of a suitable living environment.

Senate Bill 595 is a flexible tool for funding affordable housing and is subject to local control. It would allow local communities to decide if they want to dedicate 30% of their Transient Lodging Taxes currently spent on tourism for affordable workforce housing. Local elected officials would make the decision to use this option based on the need for affordable housing in their communities. Other cities and counties may decide not to use this option.

Originating from Tillamook County, the bill would help address a need for increasing the supply of affordable housing for tourism workers who are unable to live near where they work. Their wages have not kept pace with market- rate housing costs. Growing tourism and growth in short term rentals are having a negative impact on affordable housing supply, especially in coastal communities. A strong tourism industry translates into the need for more workers who need affordable housing close to their work.

Numerous reports of businesses in high tourist areas are finding it difficult to fill jobs because of the lack of housing affordability. SB 595 will help localities use Transient Lodging Tax funds to address the effects of tourism by helping to increase the supply of affordable housing in their communities. More affordable housing will allow more low- and moderate-income wage workers to live closer to their jobs.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

Handwritten signature of Norman Turrill in black ink.

Norman Turrill
LWVOR President

Handwritten signature of Nancy G. Donovan in black ink.

Nancy Donovan
LWVOR Housing Policy Portfolio