



## **SB 595 Assisting Workers, the Local Community and the Travel Industry**

Testimony for Senate Finance and Revenue – Jody Wiser – 3.19.2019

SB 595's proposed changes to the distribution of any new transient lodging tax revenue in local communities are extremely important. The stranglehold enacted in 2003 has helped promote Oregon tourism but left the communities frequented by tourists paying the price. SB 595 makes a very important change.

Of course the tourism promotion industry dislikes this bill. But the fact of the matter is, they have so much revenue that they are extravagant in what they can do in the name of tourist promotion. For example they have the abundance of resources to create four separate brochures for one area: Bend, Sisters and Sunriver, and a Central Oregon brochure as well. In other parts of the state the same is true. The traveler can write for or walk into a tourism promotion center and receive by mail or walk out with an inch of paper for each region of the State.



Meanwhile communities don't have the resources to fix water or sewer systems or other infrastructure stretched to accommodate the needs of tourists. And the low-paid employees who serve tourists in gift shops, gas stations, and restaurants or clean their airbnbs, motel rooms and VRBO rentals can't find housing. It's time to address this problem.

We strongly support SB 595, a forward thinking and community serving change. We encourage you to pass this bill.

***We read the bills and follow the money***