

Paul L Evans
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 20



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

March 19, 2019

Committee on Economic Development
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Ref: House Bill 2733

Dear Colleagues:

House Bill 2733 (HB 2733) is offered to supplement our ongoing investments in statewide, regional, and community tourism. While there are a wide range of existing organizations that function collaboratively to ensure we optimize each, every dollar spent in encouraging tourists to visit our state and spend their monies and create new memories, there is a gap that warrants our attention. For good or ill, there are areas throughout the state – especially in rural areas – that often do not have the same spectrum of tools for optimizing opportunities, as some of the more densely populated communities.

Once upon a time the Councils of Governments (COGs), chambers of commerce, and regional tourist-oriented non-profits were better capitalized – able to do more things beyond core services. However, with a little more structural, systemic capacities, we could improve the possibilities for all areas of our state to generate increased tourism revenues. This is not intended to create a new level of bureaucracy, but rather allow for the legal association of tailored partnerships established to promote, improve, and sustain tourism experiences.

HB 2733 is very simple: it provides for the establishment of a formal district of non-profit, private, and public partnerships with authorities that are not usually considered by existing organizations. For example, one possibility is for a tourist district to establish a regional strategy for providing live music – something that is far more difficult these days than in previous years. A regional policy might alleviate some of the challenges faced by small businesses. A second example of outcomes from HB 2733 could be a partnership-based approach to a paving project transforming dirt or gravel roads that are private – but critical links – to our craft beer, distillery, and wine making facilities.

In conclusion, I believe these districts – formed only by those who seek an additional tool for optimizing their regional tourism appeal as well as the experiences of the tourists who visit, would be a helpful step forward for rural areas that need a little extra help. Please let me know what more information may be helpful for making the case, or if you have questions requiring additional clarification.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Paul L. Evans".

Paul L. Evans