

Robert R. Derber
Attorney at Law (Retired)

1211 64th Ln.
Hillsboro, OR 97124-6887

435-615-8000
rderber@gmail.com

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To: House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem Oregon 97301

Re: **Written Testimony in Support of HB 3159 (Helm)**
(Recovering Oregon's Wildlife Fund)
Hearing: 3 p.m., 02/28/2023, Hearing Room D

Chairperson Helm, Vice-Chairpersons Hartman and Owens, and Committee Members:


This written testimony supports your favorable review of HB 3159 (Helm). The measure increases Oregon's Transient Lodging Tax ("TLT") by 1½% and allocates the additional revenues between Travel Oregon and promotion of Oregon Conservation Strategy efforts. I am a Washington County attorney and CPA (retired).

The current State TLT (1½%) is lower than most other states and will continue to be so even if raised to 3% by the passage of this bill. Several local jurisdictions have their own TLT measure that captures this difference. Our Washington County rate is 9% (in addition to the State's 1.5%). Unfortunately, local TLT revenues seldom promote Oregon conservation or tourism. Rather, a significant amount is allocated to the jurisdiction's general fund.

Oregon's travel-destination status directly benefits from the conservation of our natural resources. This requires a statewide effort with a trusted revenue source. Our ranges, river basins and tidal areas are not bounded by county lines. HB 3159 is a logical and significant step targeting TLT revenues toward such a statewide coordinated effort.

Finally, Oregon's natural assets are business-attractors. Major private employers like Intel and ASML successfully promote Oregon to secure needed talent. These firms bring good jobs and educational opportunities. Witness last October's 50M gift by NVIDIA founders for a new OSU Innovation Center. The Center's express focus includes climate and oceanographic innovation and the single gift equals 80% of the estimated HB 3159 annual revenues.

This bill invests in an area of proven returns for Oregon. A majority of the revenues will come from our visitors who enjoy our natural resources. I ask you please vote YES in support of HB 3159.



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