



Crook County

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March 19, 2025

To: House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans

Re: Language Clarification Request in Support of HB 3556 – Extending Permissible Uses of Transient Lodging Tax

Dear Chair Tran, Vice-Chairs Grayber and Lewis, and Members of the Committee:

I write to you today as a supporter of House Bill 3556, which seeks to amend the uses of revenue from local transient lodging taxes—a vital change for rural communities like ours in Crook County. Our unique challenges stem from supporting a flourishing tourism sector alongside the essential services and infrastructure that sustain our rural way of life.

Every year, Central Oregon welcomes a multitude of visitors, placing substantial demands on our public safety services and the infrastructure that supports both our local economy and agricultural heritage. Currently, the restrictions on the allocation of transient lodging tax (TLT) revenues significantly hinder our ability to effectively manage these increasing demands. House Bill 3556 proposes a necessary expansion in the use of these funds, encompassing not only tourism promotion but also critical areas like public safety and rural infrastructure.

This bill introduces the flexibility needed by our county to enhance our fire, EMS, and police services, and to improve essential infrastructure such as water systems, waste management, transportation, and public amenities—all vital for maintaining the health and viability of our community.

In Crook County, where the permanent population shoulders much of the infrastructure and public safety costs, House Bill 3556 marks significant progression. It ensures that our community can continue to be a hospitable and safe place for both visitors and those who make their lives here amid our fields and open skies.

In closing, House Bill 3556 offers Crook County and other rural communities the opportunity to better balance the needs of tourism with the requirements of resident services. The flexibility provided by this bill will allow us to address the specific needs of our community, ensuring sustainability and safety. I ask for your support of this legislation, which represents not just an investment in the

adaptability of fund use, but in the continued vitality and security of rural communities like ours.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to your support of this critical initiative.

Sincerely,

X 

Brian Barney
County Commissioner