



# Clatsop County

## Board of Commissioners

800 Exchange St., Suite 410  
Astoria, OR 97103  
(503) 325-1000 phone / (503) 325-8325 fax  
[www.ClatsopCounty.gov](http://www.ClatsopCounty.gov)

March 20, 2025

House Committee On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

### RE: Request to Move House Bill 3556 to the House Committee on Revenue Without Recommendation

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

The Clatsop County Board of Commissioners urges you to move House Bill 3556 to the House Committee on Revenue without recommendation so it can receive the thorough financial and policy discussion it deserves.

Tourism draws millions of visitors to Oregon’s scenic counties and cities each year, bringing economic benefits but also significant challenges for public safety. In particular, four coastal counties—Lincoln, Clatsop, Tillamook, and Curry—see the highest average daily population increase per capita.<sup>1</sup> This data is an indicator of the communities most affected by a disproportionately large influx of visitors.

Overnight-Visitor Day Share of Resident Pop. <sup>2</sup>				
County	2021	2022	2023	Average
Lincoln County	28%	27%	25%	<b>27%</b>
Clatsop County	24%	23%	24%	<b>24%</b>
Tillamook County	20%	23%	25%	<b>23%</b>
Curry County	20%	22%	24%	<b>22%</b>
Jefferson	13%	17%	16%	<b>16%</b>
Wheeler County	14%	16%	16%	<b>15%</b>

During peak tourism months, Clatsop County's population doubles or even triples, serving over 120,000 people, despite a revenue base designed for a population of 40,000.<sup>3</sup> This places immense strain on public safety services funded by and for a smaller resident population, impacting services and service levels. HB 3556 is critical for our County and other communities affected by tourism, ensuring that we can maintain safe and sustainable communities for

both residents and visitors. Moving this bill to the House Committee on Revenue will ensure that the financial implications and necessary policy adjustments are fully examined, allowing stakeholders to engage in a meaningful discussion about how to best support tourism-impacted communities.

Tourism is vital to Clatsop County’s economy, but the surge in visitors strains local services and infrastructure, creating significant challenges for emergency response systems. HB 3556 addresses this

<sup>1</sup> Dean Runyan Associates. “The Economic Impact of Travel in Oregon: Calendar Year 2023 Preliminary.” Travel Oregon. (2024)

<sup>2</sup> Overnight-Visitor Day Share of Resident Population is equal to the annual overnight visitor days divided by 365 divided by the resident population.

<sup>3</sup> Dyke, Andrew, et al. “Clatsop County Analysis of the Fiscal Impacts of Tourism.” ECONorthwest. (2023)

issue by allowing local governments to allocate new or increased Transient Lodging Tax (TLT) revenues toward tourism-impacted services, including public safety.

Tourism-related incidents increase demands on law enforcement, fire departments, search and rescue teams, emergency medical services, and the District Attorney's Office. First responders must manage a higher volume of calls for accidents and incidents on our highways and recreational sites. In rural areas, volunteer-staffed fire agencies face significant challenges due to heavy workloads, insufficient funding, and limited staff. In Clatsop County, this includes 11 fire agencies that rely on volunteers in order to provide year-round services.

Each year, a significant number of visitors interact with local law enforcement and the justice system. From 2019 to 2024, visitors accounted for approximately one-third of all jail bookings, arrests, and tickets in Clatsop County, as well as 15% of crime victims. Additionally, our local emergency medical services provider responded to an average of 382 service calls per month, with peak months exceeding this average by more than 14%. Without the ability to allocate TLT revenue toward essential public safety services, local governments are left without the resources needed to respond effectively to these increasing demands.

Despite the revenue tourism generates, the required 70/30 split of local TLT revenue under ORS 320.350 disproportionately allocates funds to tourism promotion and facilities. It requires that for all new local TLT rates and increases established after June 30, 2003, 70% must be used for tourism promotion and tourism-related facilities, leaving only 30% for discretionary use. This allocation fails to account for the true costs of tourism, especially the heavy burden it places on essential public safety services. While tourism generates significant revenue through local TLTs, local governments are forced to subsidize its impacts because current restrictions prevent communities from using these funds to address the very challenges tourism brings.

Moreover, Clatsop County faces a difficult decision: either continue subsidizing the impacts of tourism with our limited General Fund revenue or increase local TLT rates to generate adequate discretionary revenue for critical public safety services. The County recognizes the concerns of local hotels and lodging businesses about how a TLT increase could affect their operations and does not want to raise local TLT rates unless absolutely necessary. Our first and most preferred option is legislative action to modify the mandated use of 70% for tourism promotion and tourism-related facilities. However, if our legislative efforts are unsuccessful, the Clatsop County Board of Commissioners will have no choice but to move forward with adjusting the local TLT rate to ensure the sustainability of essential public safety services.

HB 3556 would provide this much-needed flexibility for local governments to use TLT funds for critical public safety services, a change that is particularly important for tourism-heavy communities like Clatsop County. Ensuring that these funds can support local law enforcement, fire departments, search and rescue teams, emergency medical services, and our justice system is not only a matter of public safety—it is essential for sustaining tourism itself. A safe and well-supported destination enhances visitors' experiences, encouraging them to return and strengthening Oregon's tourism economy long-term.

**For these reasons, we strongly urge you to move HB 3556 to the House Committee on Revenue without recommendation, allowing for a full and informed discussion on how to best support tourism-impacted communities.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Mark Kujala, Chair  
District 1



Anthony Huacuja, Commissioner  
District 2



Pamela Wev, Commissioner  
District 3



Courtney Bangs, Vice Chair  
District 4



Lianne Thompson, Commissioner  
District 5

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- *Addressing the Impacts of Tourism on Public Safety (summary document with a list of supporting agencies)*
- *Non-County Residents by Month in Clatsop County for 2019-2024 (Bookings, Arrests, Tickets, and Crime Victims)*

# Addressing the Impacts of Tourism on Public Safety



Tourism draws millions of visitors to Oregon’s scenic counties and cities each year, bringing economic benefits but also significant challenges for public safety. In particular, four coastal counties—Lincoln, Clatsop, Tillamook, and Curry—see the highest average daily population increase per capita.<sup>1</sup> This data is an indicator of the communities most affected by a disproportionately large influx of visitors.

## The Challenge in Clatsop County

Clatsop County, like other tourism-impacted areas, experiences a dramatic population surge during peak seasons—**doubling or even tripling its population**. This influx places immense strain on public safety services funded by and for a smaller resident population, impacting service levels for both residents and visitors.

While tourism generates vital local revenue, the mandated 70/30 split of Transient Lodging Tax (TLT) revenue under ORS 320.350 disproportionately allocates funds to tourism promotion and facilities. It requires that for all new TLT rates and increases established after June 30, 2003, 70% must be used for tourism promotion and tourism-related facilities and only 30% is available for discretionary use.

This leaves local governments without adequate resources to address the impacts of tourism on critical public safety services.

## Supporters

The following agencies support this effort:



## Other Emergency Services

**Tourism increases demand for local resources to respond to accidents and incidents on highways and recreational sites.** In rural areas, volunteer-staffed fire agencies are under substantial strain with their workload, financial capacity, and staffing. In Clatsop County:

- 11 fire agencies utilize volunteer staff to provide year-round services.
- From 2019-2024, the local EMS provider received an average of 382 service calls per month. Call volumes during May through September and November through December regularly exceeded this average, with August reaching the highest monthly average of about 436 calls.

## Law Enforcement & DA’s Office

Each year, a significant number of visitors interact with local law enforcement and the justice system. In Clatsop County, from 2019-2024, visitors accounted for an annual average of:

- **One-third of all jail bookings, arrests, and tickets**
- **15% of crime victims**

## The Solution

**Tourism impacted jurisdictions in Oregon are advocating for greater flexibility in how TLT revenues may be used** in order to address the impacts of tourism on critical public safety services provided by law enforcement agencies, District Attorney’s Offices, fire agencies, search and rescue, and emergency medical services providers of cities, counties, and special districts.

1. Dean Runyan Associates. “The Economic Impact of Travel in Oregon: Calendar Year 2023 Preliminary.” Travel Oregon. (2024)

### Non-County Resident Bookings (% of total bookings)

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual Avg %
2019	27%	26%	28%	28%	20%	21%	30%	22%	37%	24%	25%	32%	27%
2020	16%	25%	30%	28%	40%	29%	33%	29%	35%	27%	28%	31%	29%
2021	26%	26%	36%	39%	34%	40%	33%	35%	38%	28%	35%	37%	34%
2022	38%	29%	29%	35%	31%	25%	35%	36%	40%	31%	31%	28%	32%
2023	26%	25%	35%	34%	38%	37%	35%	38%	31%	39%	30%	24%	33%
2024	32%	42%	31%	28%	34%	41%	30%	31%	35%	28%	37%	31%	33%
<b>Monthly Avg</b>	27%	29%	32%	32%	33%	32%	32%	32%	36%	29%	31%	30%	

### Non-County Resident Arrests (% of total arrests)

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual Avg %
2019	27%	21%	36%	25%	29%	27%	25%	28%	30%	25%	23%	40%	28%
2020	27%	30%	35%	33%	37%	23%	34%	35%	33%	29%	22%	25%	30%
2021	26%	30%	32%	38%	33%	23%	26%	32%	40%	32%	24%	32%	31%
2022	38%	34%	32%	32%	24%	36%	35%	35%	32%	33%	34%	27%	33%
2023	27%	29%	30%	28%	32%	36%	30%	35%	29%	27%	26%	29%	30%
2024	28%	37%	28%	31%	30%	36%	31%	45%	30%	39%	36%	31%	33%
<b>Monthly Avg</b>	29%	30%	32%	31%	31%	30%	30%	35%	32%	31%	28%	31%	

### Non-County Resident Tickets (% of total tickets)

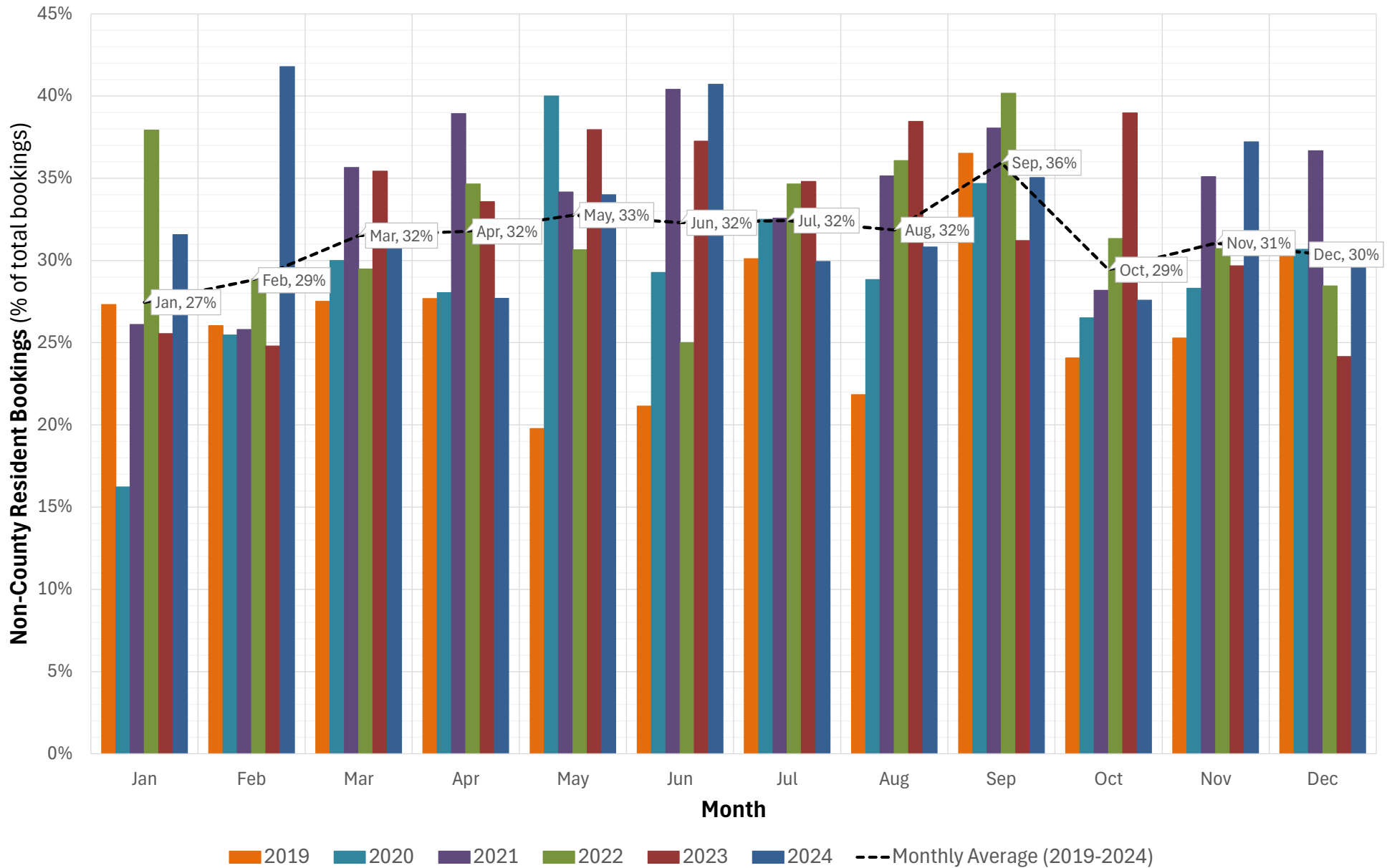
Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual Avg %
2019	29%	29%	42%	31%	33%	37%	41%	40%	38%	24%	30%	30%	34%
2020	29%	36%	44%	29%	47%	45%	43%	37%	30%	35%	37%	28%	37%
2021	31%	29%	35%	40%	42%	48%	36%	46%	39%	35%	31%	26%	36%
2022	25%	40%	43%	33%	28%	34%	40%	36%	24%	28%	32%	24%	32%
2023	27%	30%	28%	35%	44%	28%	35%	47%	30%	38%	26%	26%	33%
2024	32%	33%	29%	30%	41%	37%	45%	45%	28%	26%	27%	28%	33%
<b>Monthly Avg</b>	29%	33%	37%	33%	39%	38%	40%	42%	31%	31%	31%	27%	

### Non-County Resident Crime Victims (% of total victims)

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual Avg %
2019	13%	10%	11%	11%	13%	16%	22%	32%	18%	13%	19%	22%	17%
2020	12%	19%	11%	8%	6%	14%	24%	19%	11%	13%	8%	8%	13%
2021	12%	11%	9%	14%	18%	12%	11%	14%	12%	9%	18%	16%	13%
2022	8%	33%	9%	16%	16%	15%	17%	17%	18%	21%	9%	12%	16%
2023	14%	10%	12%	9%	19%	17%	20%	30%	14%	15%	16%	16%	16%
2024	5%	13%	12%	20%	16%	21%	22%	16%	13%	13%	17%	8%	15%
<b>Monthly Avg</b>	11%	16%	10%	13%	15%	16%	19%	21%	14%	14%	14%	14%	

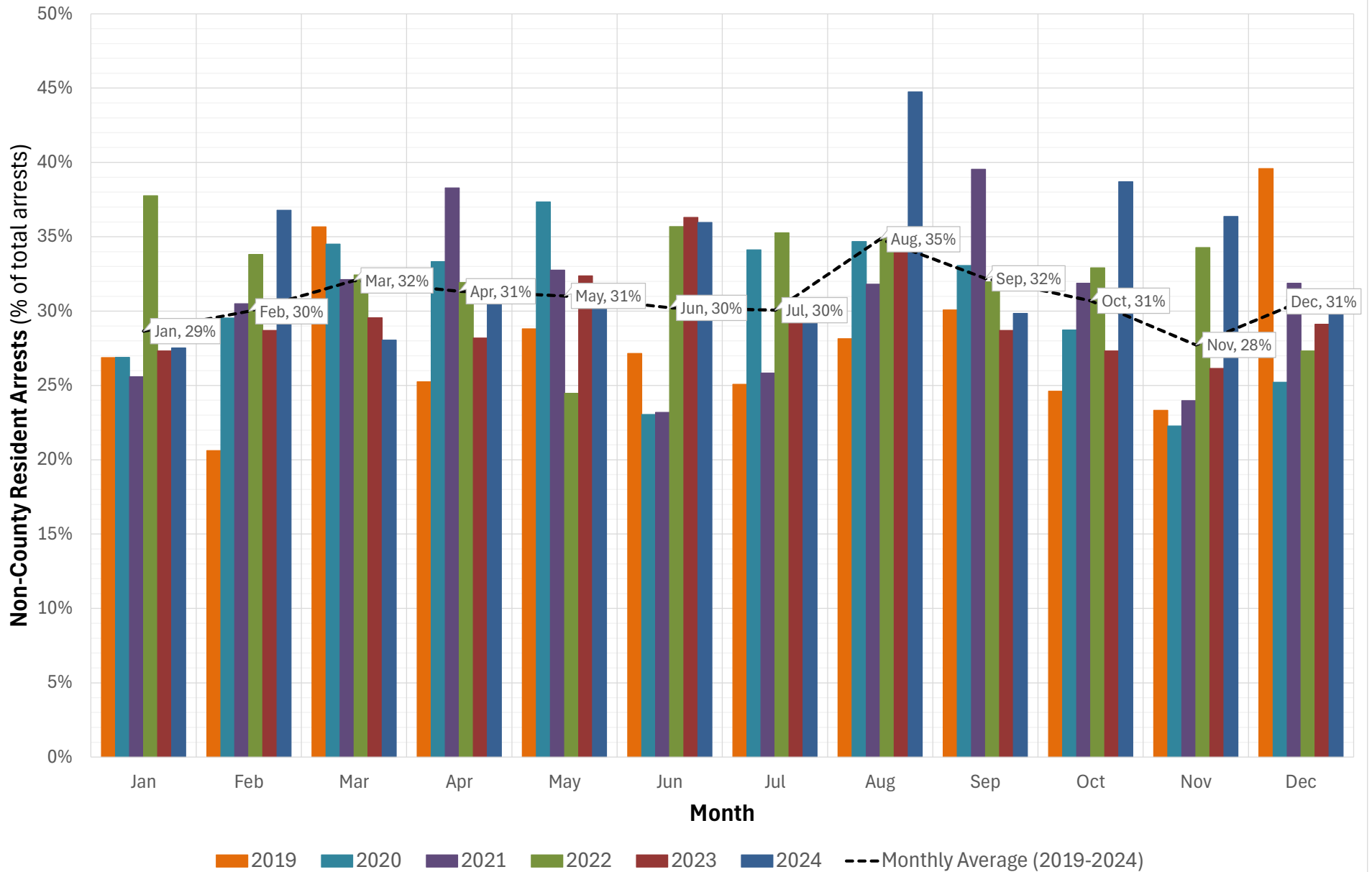
\*\*Greater than Annual Avg

## Persons Booked in Clatsop County | Non-County Residents by Month (2019-2024)



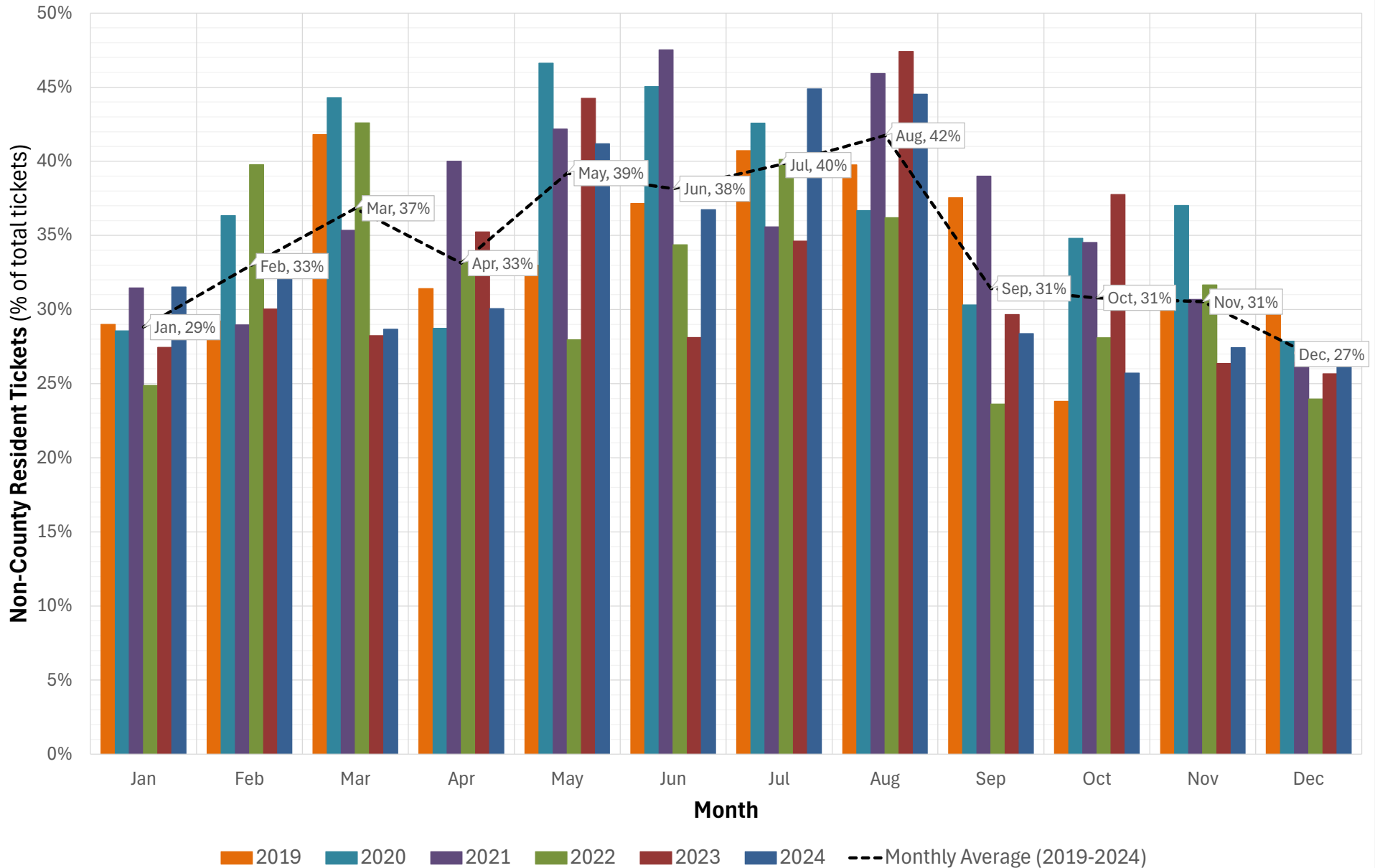
**\*\*Bookings:** This includes instances in which someone in Clatsop County was taken into custody, transported to the County jail, and their personal and case information was recorded. After booking, the individual may have been immediately released (e.g., on bail or recognizance) or remained detained at the County jail pending further legal proceedings.

## Persons Arrested in Clatsop County | Non-County Residents by Month (2019-2024)



**\*\*Arrests:** This includes instances in which someone in Clatsop County was taken into custody based on probable cause or suspicion of a crime. While arrests often lead to bookings, some are resolved through "cite and release," where the person is issued a citation and released with a court date.

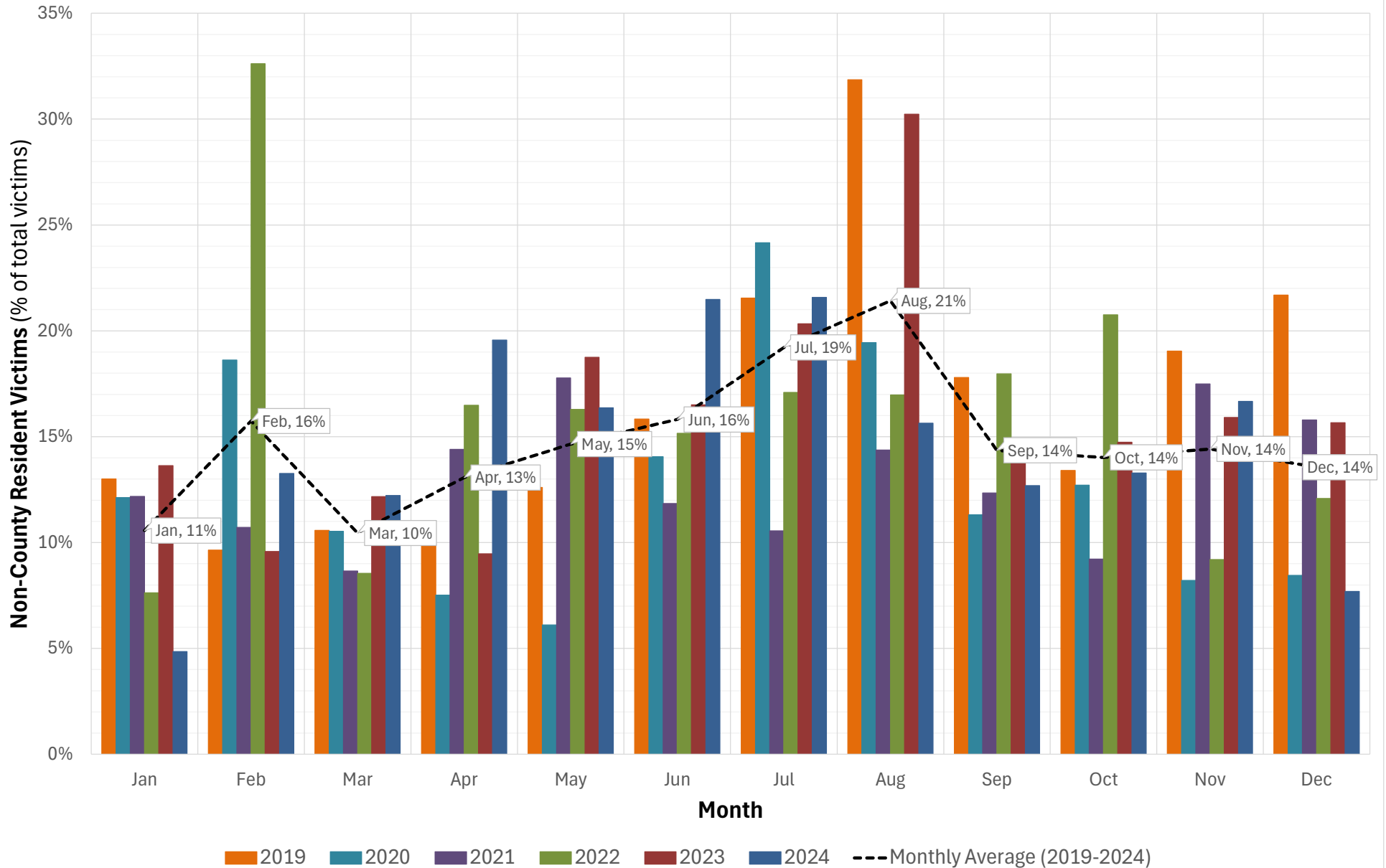
## Persons Ticketed in Clatsop County | Non-County Residents by Month (2019-2024)



**\*\*Tickets:** This includes instances in which local law enforcement issued citations to individuals in Clatsop County for violations (e.g. traffic offenses and other non-jailable offenses such as Minor in Possession), typically requiring a fine or court appearance without taking the individual into custody.



## Crime Victims in Clatsop County | Non-County Residents by Month (2019-2024)



\*\*Victims: Individuals who suffered harm—physical, emotional, psychological, or financial—due to a reported criminal act in Clatsop County.