



May 8, 2025

House Committee On Revenue
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for HB 3962-2 – Ensuring Sustainable Tourism and Community Safety

Chair Nathanson, Vice-Chairs Reschke and Walters, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the cities, fire agencies, and law enforcement departments of Clatsop County, we strongly urge your support for House Bill 3962-2. This measure represents a practical and balanced solution to a longstanding challenge faced by Oregon communities that host millions of visitors each year: how to sustain public safety services under the weight of tourism-driven demands.

Tourism is vital to Oregon's economy, especially on the coast where it supports countless small businesses and local jobs. But the same visitors who drive economic activity also depend on local emergency and public safety services to stay safe—services that are funded primarily by local property taxes. In Clatsop County, where the permanent population is approximately 40,000, the number of people in our communities can triple during peak tourist season, surpassing 120,000. This seasonal surge places enormous strain on police, fire, EMS, and city infrastructure.

From 2019 to 2024, roughly one-third of all jail bookings, arrests, and citations in Clatsop County involved visitors. About 15% of crime victims during that time were also visitors. Our EMS provider regularly responds to over 380 calls per month, with that number increasing significantly during the summer months. Our 11 volunteer-supported fire agencies are expected to protect not just residents, but tens of thousands of additional people—despite chronic funding gaps, limited staffing, and aging equipment.

Local governments are eager to invest in safety and preparedness. During the pandemic, Clatsop County directed \$250,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to rural fire services—demonstrating the positive impact even modest investments can make. But federal relief dollars are temporary, and our needs are ongoing.

The problem is not a lack of revenue—it's that we're unable to use it. Under current state law (ORS 320.350), 70% of new or increased local Transient Lodging Tax (TLT) revenue must be used for tourism promotion or tourism-related facilities, leaving only 30% for all other community needs, even those directly caused by tourism. Many of our cities are struggling to spend down

their tourism promotion allocations while simultaneously lacking funds to pay for the staff, training, and equipment required to meet the public safety impacts of those same visitors.

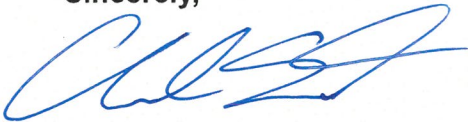
HB 3962-2 would change that. It would allow local governments to use a portion of TLT revenue to respond to tourism-related public safety demands—without reducing support for tourism itself. It aligns funding with reality: that safe, responsive communities are the foundation of a thriving tourism industry.

Despite multiple bills introduced this session to address these challenges, a long-term solution has yet to emerge. HB 3962-2 is that solution. It's a reasonable, actionable, and community-informed approach that ensures our cities, fire departments, and law enforcement agencies can protect both residents and visitors.

We respectfully urge your YES vote on HB 3962-2 so that Oregon communities can continue to welcome visitors safely and responsibly—for the benefit of all.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



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