

Submitter: Suzanne Weber
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3962
Chair Nathanson, Vice-chairs Reschke and Walters -

For the record, my name is Suzanne Weber and it is my privilege to serve the people of District 16 as their state senator.

District 16 is an incredibly diverse district, but a great deal of it is in Tillamook and Clatsop Counties, which rely heavily on the tourism industry.

While that reliance has brought a great deal of commercial and economic growth, it has not come with a large increase in the tax base to deal with the massive swell in people that come to the coast, especially during the summer months. While the number of people that must be served by fire departments, sheriff's departments, emergency management personnel and others balloons many times over, the amount of money that is available to our first responders does not increase, leaving them forced to do many times the work with the same amount of money. This puts both local citizens and visitors at risk.

HB 3962 addresses this by allowing funds from transient lodging taxes to be used for public safety. This is a logical solution to what has become a dangerous problem. That is why local sheriffs, fire chiefs and other emergency responders have testified in favor of this bill. They understand the need more than anyone else.

This legislation does not address the full breadth of need caused by a massive increase in tourism in our coastal communities over the last few decades, but it does take a critical first step. I encourage the committee to advance the bill swiftly.

Regards,

Suzanne Weber
State Senator
District 16