



Date: February 4, 2026

Name: Willamette Valley Visitors Association

Bill Number and Committee: HB 4134 – Testimony to the House Committee on Revenue

Dear Chair Nathanson, Vice-Chair Reschke, Vice-Chair Walters, and members of the House Committee on Revenue

On behalf of the Willamette Valley Visitors Association (WVVA), I respectfully submit testimony in opposition to House Bill 4134.

WVVA represents communities, lodging providers, and visitor-facing businesses across seven counties in the Willamette Valley. Our role is to support sustainable tourism as an economic development tool one that creates jobs, supports small businesses, and helps communities reinvest in infrastructure, facilities, and quality of life improvements that benefit both visitors and residents.

While we recognize the Legislature faces difficult funding decisions, HB 4134 would increase the statewide transient lodging tax in a way that risks undermining one of Oregon's most successful economic development strategies.

Importantly, this proposal would nearly double the statewide portion of the tax, compounding existing local rates and eroding Oregon's price competitiveness. Oregon currently has a 1.5% statewide transient lodging tax, layered on top of city, county, and special taxing district. In practice, visitors to the Willamette Valley already pay an average of approximately 10% in lodging taxes, with some destinations in Oregon reaching as high as 16.5%. An additional statewide increase, while seemingly modest on paper, is felt much more acutely by travelers, meeting planners, sports tournament organizers, and tour operators who compare total costs across destinations.

Nearly 30% of visitation in Oregon is generated by Oregonians traveling more than 50 miles or booking overnight accommodations. HB 4134 would not be borne solely by out-of-state visitors; it would further increase costs for Oregon families, sports teams, and community organizations at a time when affordability is already a concern.

There is a common misconception that destination organizations retain the majority of lodging tax revenue for marketing. Much if the investment of tourism lodging taxes invests in tourism

economic development. This is a carefully stewarded process to generate long-term returns for communities not just through marketing, but through investments in facilities, accessibility, downtown vitality, trails, events, and visitor services that although aimed at visitors also enhance resident livability.

Since 2018, WVVA has invested more than \$409,000 in grants supporting community-based projects throughout the Willamette Valley. These investments have helped fund downtown revitalization events, trail and accessibility improvements, wayfinding signage, sports tourism infrastructure, environmental education facilities, and participation for businesses in national and international travel trade efforts that directly drive overnight stays.

These efforts are only possible when lodging tax revenues remain stable and are reinvested strategically to grow demand, especially during non-peak seasons. Reducing competitiveness through higher taxes risks shrinking the very revenue stream communities rely on.

Oregon's tourism economy became one of the state's strongest sectors because of deliberate, long-term investment decisions made by the Legislature beginning in 2003. **HB 4134 represents a departure from that strategy by increasing costs without a clear, defensible framework that protects local economies, small lodging providers, and rural communities.**

For these reasons, the Willamette Valley Visitors Association respectfully urges a **no vote on HB 4134.**

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued commitment to Oregon's economic vitality and community well-being.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tori Middelstadt". The script is cursive and fluid.

Tori Middelstadt
Executive Director
Willamette Valley Visitors Association