

Submitter: Jeremy Carney
On Behalf Of: Myself
Committee: House Committee On Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4134

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

For the record, my name is Jeremy Carney, and I am the Senior Director of Sports at Travel Lane County. I am here today to testify in opposition to HB 4134.

This bill risks making Oregon, and Lane County in particular, less competitive for exactly the kind of events this Legislature has previously invested in.

During the 2022 World Athletics Championships, several international federations chose to base their training camps throughout Lane County and across Oregon. One federation in particular, Botswana, selected Cottage Grove as its home base. In the weeks leading up to the championships, these athletes lived and trained in this great community. Local residents and businesses took pride in hosting the team, and to this day, people still share stories about the experience. There was a real sense of connection and pride that extended well beyond Eugene.

This summer, we are excited to welcome many of these same federations back as they prepare for the World Athletics U20 Championships at Hayward Field. That continued return is not accidental. It reflects sustained investment in tourism infrastructure and event hosting, made possible by the transient lodging tax (TLT) being used for its intended purpose.

This very body invested significant resources, including TLT, to bring the World Championships to Oregon in 2022 and that investment continues to give back today, not just in Eugene, but in our rural communities as well. If we continue to use this tool as intended, these same federations could return once again in 2028 as they prepare for the Olympic Games in L.A.

Our opposition to HB 4134 is twofold.

First, this bill is not simply about a 1.25% increase. In Eugene, it raises our total lodging tax rate from 13% to 14.25%. In a market where event organizers compare destinations line by line, that difference matters. Higher lodging costs would make it harder to attract large events like the World Athletics U20 Championships or other major events and group travel. Over time, this reduces visitation and shrinks the very tax base this bill relies on.

Second, while we respect the intent, raising the statewide tax and allowing these

funds to be redirected to wildlife and habitat restoration changes how the revenue was intended to be used. Once lodging tax dollars are no longer reliably used for tourism and event development, it becomes harder to make long-term commitments that bring events here in the first place.

In closing, HB 4134 doesn't just raise a tax. It alters a system that has proven successful and continues to deliver lasting benefits to communities across our great state.

For those reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to oppose HB 4134.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Carney