



Date: February 4, 2026

Name: Angie Villery, Travel Salem

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:

My name is Angie Villery, and I'm President & CEO of Travel Salem. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to **HB 4134**.

Travel Salem is a nonprofit organization that serves as the official destination marketing and management organization for Salem and the Marion and Polk Counties region, **representing more than 20 communities, many of them rural.**

Transient lodging taxes were established for a clear purpose: to support tourism promotion, tourism-related facilities, and destination management activities that generate visitation, jobs, and economic return for local communities. This creates a sustainable cycle where visitor-generated revenue is reinvested to grow the visitor economy.

Wildlife programs, while important, **do not serve this purpose**. These programs are agricultural and natural resource based. They do not directly promote tourism, increase overnight stays, or provide measurable tourism-related economic impact. Using lodging tax revenues for these programs creates a misalignment between the funding source and the policy objective.

Allowing lodging tax dollars to be diverted for non-tourism purposes also sets a concerning precedent. Once these funds are treated as a flexible revenue source, the original intent of the tax is weakened, creating uncertainty for tourism organizations, local governments, and private partners who rely on stable funding to plan and invest.

Wildlife programs deserve stable and appropriate funding, but that funding **should come from sources aligned with their purpose**, such as the state general fund, federal programs, wildlife programming or dedicated conservation funding—not from lodging tax revenues.

Travel Salem opposes **HB 4134** and respectfully urges a no vote. Visitors are increasingly price sensitive, and **additional lodging taxes would negatively impact Oregon's competitiveness as**

a destination. It is also important to note that many lodging customers are Oregon residents, meaning **this tax increase would be borne by Oregonians** at a time when cost-of-living pressures are already significant.

Further, increased taxes place added strain on small and independent lodging properties that are already facing rising operational costs. **These pressures could reduce visitation, limit reinvestment, and negatively affect local jobs and communities.**

In 2025, Travel Salem:

- Supported 7,950 jobs
- Welcomed 2.6 million visitors
- Leveraged more than \$2 million in private-sector investment

For these reasons, I respectfully oppose the use of transient lodging tax funds for wildlife programs and urge the committee to preserve the integrity and intended purpose of lodging tax revenues.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service to the people of Oregon.

Sincerely,



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