

Submitter: Taran Patel  
On Behalf Of: Columbia Gorge Hotel  
Committee: House Committee On Revenue  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4134

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Taran Patel, and I serve as the Northwest Regional Director for the Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA). AAHOA is the leading organization representing hotel and motel owners across the United States, with a significant membership in Oregon. Our members own and operate over 67% of all hotels and motels in the state of Oregon. These are predominantly small, family-owned businesses that provide essential lodging services, create jobs, and contribute substantially to local economies through tourism-related spending, employment, and tax revenue.

I am writing to express AAHOA's strong opposition to any proposal to raise Oregon's statewide transient lodging tax (currently 1.5%) and to redirect those additional funds to purposes unrelated to creating or promoting tourism, such as wildlife conservation or other non-tourism programs (as seen in measures like HB 4134 or similar bills introduced in the 2026 session).

The existing statewide lodging tax is specifically designed to fund tourism promotion through Travel Oregon, which directly benefits our industry by attracting visitors, supporting marketing efforts, and driving economic activity in hospitality. Redirecting increased tax revenues away from tourism promotion undermines the original intent of the tax and harms the very sector it was meant to support.

Oregon's tourism industry is already facing challenges, including competition from neighboring states with lower or more tourism-focused taxes, economic recovery pressures, and fluctuating visitor numbers. Raising the statewide lodging tax would make Oregon less competitive:

It would increase costs for visitors, particularly large groups, conventions, and leisure travelers who are price-sensitive and compare destinations across states.

Higher effective tax rates (when combined with local lodging taxes, which can push totals well above 10-15% in many areas) could price Oregon out of the market, diverting conventions, events, and family vacations to states like Washington, Idaho, or California that maintain lower statewide burdens or allocate funds more directly to tourism enhancement.

This would lead to reduced occupancy rates, lower revenues for hotel and motel owners, potential job losses, and diminished local tax contributions from tourism.

Our members, who represent the majority of Oregon's lodging properties, cannot support this change. It places an unfair burden on an industry still working to stabilize after recent economic headwinds, without providing corresponding benefits like increased tourism marketing or infrastructure that would drive more visitors to our

state.

AAHOA urges the Committee to:

Oppose any increase in the statewide transient lodging tax.

Reject proposals that redirect lodging tax revenues away from tourism promotion and related activities.

Prioritize policies that protect and strengthen Oregon's tourism industry, ensuring it remains a competitive economic driver.

We are committed to working with legislators on balanced solutions that support Oregon's economy without imposing additional hardships on small business owners in the hospitality sector. Thank you for your consideration of this testimony and for the opportunity to represent the voices of Oregon's hotel and motel owners.