

Date: February 3, 2026

Name: Scott Stokley, Owner, Lou's Kitchen, Touch of Bavaria and Angel Mountain Christmas

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 Scott Stokley, and I am the owner of Stokley Enterprises LLC, a family-owned company with a full-service restaurant, and two retail stores located in Mt. Angel, Oregon. I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to HB 4134.

Lou's Kitchen, Touch of Bavaria and Angel Mountain Christmas have proudly served our community and visitors to Mt. Angel for many years. As a locally owned small business, we experience firsthand both the benefits and the challenges that come with tourism. Visitors drawn to Mt. Angel for events like Oktoberfest, holiday festivals, and regional travel are a critical part of our customer base and a key driver of economic activity for our town.

Tourism is not just a seasonal boost—it sustains year-round jobs, supports local suppliers, and keeps small communities like ours vibrant. Our business works closely with local organizations, chambers, and event planners to encourage off-peak and shoulder-season travel, helping stabilize employment and revenue throughout the year. That consistency is essential for retaining staff and maintaining long-term business viability.

At the state level, tourism has become a cornerstone of Oregon's economy following the Tourism Investment Proposal of 2003, which created Travel Oregon and established a dedicated funding structure through the statewide transient lodging tax. This approach recognized that strategic reinvestment in tourism marketing and development would grow the overall economy rather than burden it.

While we understand the need to fund important statewide programs, Oregon cannot tax its way to long-term economic stability. The transient lodging tax was designed to be reinvested back into communities to grow local economies, create jobs, and strengthen Oregon's position as a competitive destination. Increasing this tax without a clear, consistent strategy risks undermining that original intent.

We oppose HB 4134 and respectfully ask for your no vote. Consumers are increasingly price sensitive, and higher lodging taxes make Oregon less competitive compared to neighboring states. Many lodging guests are Oregonians traveling within the state, meaning this tax increase would disproportionately impact residents at a time when the cost of living continues to rise.

Additionally, increased lodging taxes place added pressure on small and independently owned lodging properties that are already facing rising labor, food, insurance, and utility costs. Any

reduction in travel demand has a direct downstream impact on restaurants, retail stores, and service businesses like ours—ultimately affecting jobs and local economies.

In 2025, Stokley Enterprises LLC:

- Supported over **30 local jobs**
- Served thousands of residents and visitors to Mt. Angel
- Actively participated in and supported community events, fundraisers, and local organizations
- Invested in ongoing improvements to our business to better serve both residents and visitors

Your opposition to HB 4134 will allow small businesses and communities like ours to continue planning responsibly, investing locally, and supporting Oregon's tourism economy in a sustainable way.

Thank you for your time, your service, and for considering the impacts this legislation would have on small businesses, workers, and communities across Oregon. I appreciate the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

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