

WRITTEN TESTIMONY – OPPOSITION TO HB 4134

Submitted to: Oregon House Committee on Revenue

Submitted by: [Your Name], General Manager, The Bidwell Hotel, Portland, Oregon

Date: February 4, 2026

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

My name is Jacob Wright, and I serve as the General Manager of The Bidwell Marriott Portland, located on Broadway in the heart of downtown Portland. I've worked in Portland's hospitality sector since 2016 and consider myself not just a hotelier, but a committed part of this community's recovery story.

I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB 4134, which would increase the statewide Transient Lodging Tax by 1.25%. This may seem incremental on paper—but its consequences are anything but small for Portland's fragile hospitality economy, and for the people behind the front desks, in the kitchens, and across the service corridors who are rebuilding careers in a market still on its knees.

Portland's Recovery Is Not Complete—It's at a Crossroads

At The Bidwell, we've worked tirelessly to rebuild. In 2025, we finished the year as Portland's #1 ranked hotel on TripAdvisor—a testament to the exceptional service delivered by a team that includes long-tenured associates who've worked in this building since the 1990s. But make no mistake: our success is hard-won, and precarious.

While occupancy has inched forward, group demand and major citywide events—the lifeblood of Portland's economy—remain scarce. We all remember a time when the city's weekends overflowed with culinary festivals, riverfront activations, and global conferences. Those aren't memories of luxury—they were economic engines, job creators, and community builders. Today, many of those events have disappeared, and their return is uncertain.

We're Already Near the Price Ceiling

Portland's current lodging tax sits at 16%, already among the highest on the West Coast. HB 4134 would push us to 17.25%, second only to Seattle. That rate matters when event planners, associations, and leisure travelers compare cities. And when rates go up, we're often forced to cut our base room price just to stay in consideration—wiping out our margins and jeopardizing the very jobs this industry exists to support.

Our local infrastructure is too fragile to absorb this. The city has already seen 77 restaurant closures in the past year, and at least seven downtown hotels have faced foreclosure or receivership. And while public sentiment is slowly improving, a significant portion of our potential customers still won't even consider Portland because of its lingering national image.

We're fighting hard to change that narrative. But we need help.

This Tax Hurts People, Not Just Businesses

When you think about HB 4134, I ask that you don't picture buildings or brands—picture people.

- Picture Yeny Hernandez, my Housekeeping Manager, who started as an entry-level room attendant and now leads her own team.
- Picture my line cooks, who are the sole providers for their households.
- Picture my Chief Engineer, who relocated to Portland for his first shot at management.
- And picture the college students balancing front desk shifts while attending school full time.

These are the people you tax when you tax the rooms they help make spotless, welcoming, and safe.

Tourism Promotion Is Economic Development

The statewide lodging tax was designed to promote tourism and drive visitation. That's not a side benefit—it's the whole point. To now divert those funds away from their intended purpose undermines every effort we're making on the ground to bring Portland back to life. Now is the time to double down on investment, not reroute it.

We don't need a new tax. We need our state to rally behind our recovery, to give visitors a reason to return, and to help Portland reclaim its place as a hospitality capital of the West.

Final Thought

If I could say just one thing to this committee, it would be this:

Please think about the housekeepers, cooks, and servers who are counting on your judgment. They're not looking for handouts. They're showing up every day to build something better—one guest, one room, one meal at a time. Please don't make their work harder.

Thank you for your time and for your service to Oregon.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'J' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Jacob Wright

General Manager, The Bidwell Marriott Portland