



February 3rd, 2026

Dear Chair Nathanson, Vice-Chair Reschke, Vice-Chair Walters, and Members of the House Committee on Revenue,

On behalf of the Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce, I am writing to express our strong opposition to HB 4134, which proposes a 1.25% increase to Oregon's statewide Transient Lodging Tax (TLT) while diverting new revenue away from tourism promotion and destination management.

The Wallowa County Chamber represents businesses across Wallowa County and serves as the designated destination marketing and management organization for our region. Tourism is not a peripheral industry here. It is a core economic driver that supports local jobs, small businesses, and essential community services in a remote, rural county with limited economic diversification.

Oregon's statewide lodging tax was established as a self-assessed tool with a clear purpose: reinvesting in tourism to generate visitation, grow local economies, and create jobs. HB 4134 departs from that foundational principle by increasing the tax burden on lodging providers and visitors while severing the direct connection between the tax and the industry that generates it.

While we recognize and support the importance of wildlife habitat protection and responsible wolf management, these priorities are statewide public goods that benefit all Oregonians. They deserve a comprehensive, statewide funding solution - not one that singles out a single industry to shoulder the burden.

For rural communities like ours, the impacts of this proposal are immediate and disproportionate:

- Lodging businesses are still navigating rising operating costs, workforce shortages, and uneven demand recovery.
- Increased lodging taxes reduce competitiveness, particularly for destinations near state borders and for shoulder-season travel.

- Diverting lodging tax revenue away from tourism investment undermines the very system that generates those revenues and risks reversing decades of progress in rural economic development.

Tourism cannot be taxed into sustainability. Oregon must grow its economy, not weaken a proven investment model that has delivered strong returns for communities statewide.

Given the compressed timeline of the short legislative session and the significant implications of this proposal, we respectfully urge the Committee to oppose HB 4134 and pause this effort in favor of a more collaborative, equitable approach developed with industry and community stakeholders.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and for your consideration of the impacts this legislation would have on rural Oregon communities like Wallowa County.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Piper
Executive Director

Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce

director@wallowacounty.org | (541) 426-4622 | PO Box 427, 101 W Main St, Enterprise, OR 97828