

Date: February 4, 2026

Name: Yvonne Putze, Executive Director, Lord & Schryver Conservancy and Chair, Salem Culture and Heritage Forum.

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 Yvonne Putze, and I am the Executive Director of the Lord & Schryver Conservancy and the Chair of the Salem Cultural & Heritage Forum. I appreciate the opportunity to convey my personal opposition to HB 4134.

I have spent the last 10 years dedicated to working as an Executive Director within two well-respected nonprofit historic organizations and I collaborate closely with peer organizations. I see the tremendous impact our organizations bring to the community and the impact of funding received through transient lodging tax income. The grants and marketing funded through lodging taxes help to create awareness of the wonderful attractions and events in our market resulting in a dramatic impact across the community.

Through my work I understand the challenges and constraints that may arise with increased tourism, particularly on resources and public lands. I also understand the enormous value that tourism brings to the local economies of our state. It is my honor to represent tourism and to work to support our local economy.

At the state level, tourism has become a bedrock of Oregon's economy as a result of the Tourism Investment Proposal of 2003, which created Travel Oregon, established a dedicated funding source through the statewide transient lodging tax, and protected local funding investments in tourism, now the state's fourth largest economic sector.

During the recession of 2003, the Governor, legislature, and leaders across the state recognized that tourism was an untapped market, and that strategic and sustained investment in tourism was needed to establish Oregon as a travel destination for business and leisure. While we understand the pressing demands to fund a myriad of statewide programs, Oregon cannot afford to tax its way to a sustainable economy; we must be committed to growing our way to a sustainable economy. Transient lodging tax is intended to be reinvested in communities to help grow local economies in support for Oregon's overall health and economic vitality. The tourism industry has proven we will come to the table for initiatives that generate long term, strategic economic returns. Any increase to state Transient Lodging Tax deserves to be part of a consistent, defensible, and clear platform for the value of tourism as an economic development engine.

While I value and support environmental stewardship, this legislation represents a significant shift in how lodging tax revenues are used and structured rather than appropriately identifying new independent funding for additional revenue dedicated to Fish and Wildlife habitat preservation.

I oppose HR 4134 and ask for your no vote on this bill. Consumers have become increasingly price conscious, and increasing this tax would have negative impacts on Oregon as a competitive destination to visit. Many of those who travel within Oregon are fellow Oregonians, so this lodging tax increase will be paid by residents of the state, not just visitors, at a time when the cost of living is increasingly difficult. This increased tax would also add additional costs to smaller properties, who are already struggling with the rising cost of running a business. All of these have the potential to lead to a decrease in future business, which would harm our local communities and our workforce.

Your opposition to HB 4134 will allow your constituents and businesses to consistently plan for strategic investments and to continue important projects and partnerships vital to Oregon's economic viability.

Thank you for helping your tourism constituency remain stewards of Oregon's natural wonders.

Yvonne Putze



Executive Director
Lord & Schryver Conservancy and Chair, Salem Culture & Heritage Forum