



Date: February 4, 2026

Name: Explore Prineville & Prineville Crook County Chamber of Commerce

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

We are Andrea Weaver, Tourism Development Specialist for Explore Prineville and Deb Shaw, Director of Commerce & Tourism at Prineville-Crook County Chamber of Commerce/Explore Prineville; we appreciate the opportunity to convey my opposition to HB 4134.

Explore Prineville is the go-to hub for discovering Prineville and Crook County's small-town charm, rich history, and big outdoor adventure. It highlights local trails, reservoirs, dark skies, and high-desert scenery, along with welcoming shops, eateries, and year-round community events that make this corner of Central Oregon a memorable place to visit.

We recognize the challenges communities face as tourism grows, especially the strain on local resources and public lands. At the same time, we deeply value the tremendous economic benefits tourism brings to Oregon's communities. It is my honor to champion responsible tourism and work in support of our local economy.

It is the successful collaboration between the local businesses and regional DMOs that help to generate economic activity and new jobs across Oregon, in even the most rural parts of our state. We focus much of our marketing efforts on growing *non-peak, off-season* travel because we know the importance of leveling out the seasonality of tourism to create year-round job security and stability for our workforce. That stability helps resorts support a healthy tourism 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 4th 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.

We 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 visitors in 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 many smaller properties, some of whom are greatly 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.

At Explore Prineville in 2025 alone:

- **We supported 680 jobs**
- **We brought in a County wide \$55 million in visitor spending that resulted in a 3% increase in TLT funding for our community and local businesses**
- **We act as the gateway for the 4 million total visitors to the Central Oregon Region**
- **Central Oregon Community College Foundation has a \$2.4 Million scholarship funding for the 2025 – 2026 academic year, directly training the next generation of Prineville's workforce.**

- **We operate the local Prineville Visitor's Center, which welcomed 878 walk-in visitors, answered 693 phone inquiries, and distributed 255 local Rockhounding maps and guides to support tourism and visitor engagement.**

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. We will continue our work to support vibrant local communities to improve livability for all residents of Oregon.

Thank you for the privilege to submit this testimony for your consideration.



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