



February 4, 2026

**Jason Brandt Testimony – NO on HB 4134**

Good Afternoon Chair Nathanson, Vice Chairs Reschke and Walters, & Members of the House Revenue Committee. My name is Jason Brandt, President & CEO for the Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association and I'm here to encourage you to vote no on House Bill 4134.

The statewide lodging tax is one of the last dedicated revenue streams for economic development in the State of Oregon. For 23 years statewide lodging tax revenue has been exclusively used to captivate domestic and international visitors to experience the authenticity of Oregon. Our laser like focus has paid off. The industry helped pass this tax on itself in 2003, we've supported strategic tax increases in the past, and we continue to help all of Oregon's 7 tourism regions fully recover from the pandemic. It remains a fact that in the Year 2026 Oregon's statewide tourism and hospitality industries have not fully recovered from COVID 19.

We have all probably heard belief structures about tourists coming to Oregon whether we promote the state or not but the truth is the landscape to inspire trip ideation and secure bookings has never been more competitive. This industry by definition is an export economy. Travel spending across Oregon has more than doubled since 2003, and the tax revenue generated by that spending has nearly tripled. This economic activity has created more than 35,000 new jobs since 2003.

If we open up the statewide lodging tax for the first time in Oregon's history to a whole new host of state agency beneficiaries what is our opportunity cost? Passing a new \$38 million tax increase without any tie to economic development will hinder our ability to make catalytic investments for our state's future and sets us up for a perpetual struggle between agency priorities. Extracting from our tourism businesses to fund 4 additional state agencies creates harm to one of Oregon's key economic drivers. The debate we are having this session will not be the last time – every time ODFW needs more funds to accomplish their goals it will be pitted against tourism industry priorities. When the state sees an economic opportunity such as increasing the tax from 1% to 1.8% from 2016 to 2020 for the World Track Championships, environmental stakeholders will see it as an opportunity lost for their priorities to advance.

We greatly appreciate the chance to share the importance of keeping a strategic focus on economic development investments via the statewide lodging tax and we hope you will join us in protecting this dedicated revenue stream and oppose HB 4134.

Please join the industry that helped pass this tax in 2003 and agreed to increase the tax in 2016 by saying no to this proposal which includes a \$11 million dollar tax hike on Oregonians taking vacations with friends and family in their own state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jason Brandt', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Jason Brandt  
President & CEO  
Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association