



# Discover Klamath

**Date:** February 4, 2026

**Name:** Discover Klamath

**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 Millie Osguthorpe and I am the Executive Director at Discover Klamath. I appreciate the opportunity to convey my opposition to HB 4134.

At Discover Klamath, we recognize both the opportunities and responsibilities that come with sharing our region. Increased visitation can place pressure on natural resources and public lands, and we are committed to promoting tourism that is thoughtful, sustainable, and community-minded. At the same time, tourism plays a vital role in supporting local businesses, jobs, and quality of life throughout Klamath County. I

It is our privilege to represent this place we call home and to work in partnership with our communities to strengthen the local economy while preserving the landscapes and experiences that make Klamath special.

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 4<sup>th</sup> 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 Discover Klamath, we support jobs across the tourism, hospitality, and small business sectors that are vital to Klamath County's economy. We welcome visitors in ways that contribute to local businesses while encouraging responsible use of public lands and community resources. Our work includes active partnerships with local organizations through volunteerism, event support, and other community-focused initiatives. We also reinvest tourism dollars back into the community through destination stewardship, infrastructure support, and efforts that enhance the overall visitor experience.

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.

*Millie Osguthorpe*

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