

Submitter:

Dana Turell

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB4148

My name is Dana Turell. I am a vendor working in Oregon's tourism and arts economy, and my livelihood depends on a healthy, functioning visitor economy.

I am submitting testimony in opposition to HB 4148 because it weakens the economic logic that makes the transient lodging tax work in the first place.

The lodging tax was created as an economic engine. Visitors pay it, and those dollars are reinvested in ways that attract visitors, sustain demand and generate ongoing economic activity. That reinvestment is not incidental. It is the mechanism that allows the tax to keep producing revenue year after year.

HB 4148 expands the share of lodging tax revenue that can be redirected away from tourism and economic development uses. In doing so, it weakens the reinvestment model that keeps the system productive.

When lodging tax dollars are not reinvested in the visitor economy, the system does not stay neutral. It begins to work in reverse.

At first, the effects are subtle. Destinations become slightly less competitive. Marketing, events and cultural programming become harder to sustain. Over time, fewer visitors choose Oregon, fewer overnight stays occur and less revenue is generated. Eventually, the balance tips. The tax stops functioning as an engine and becomes a diminishing resource.

At that point, there is less money available for everything — tourism, local businesses and the public priorities that communities care about.

I believe strongly in funding essential public services. I also believe that purpose-built revenue tools should be used for their intended function. If Oregon wants to fund statewide priorities, those decisions should be debated transparently through the broader budget process, not by gradually repurposing a tax designed to generate economic activity.

The lodging tax works because it is reinvested. When that reinvestment weakens, so does the revenue.

HB 4148 moves Oregon closer to that tipping point. I urge you to oppose the bill and preserve the purpose-driven lodging tax framework that communities and industries

relied on when this system was created.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective.