

Submitter: Brian Lang  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Revenue  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4148

Chair and Members of the Committee,

I respectfully oppose House Bill 4148 because it reshapes local transient lodging tax policy in ways that undermine tourism-driven economic strategy and weaken accountability.

Local transient lodging taxes were designed with a clear purpose: to invest in tourism promotion and tourism-related facilities that attract visitors and grow local economies. Current law dedicates at least 70 % of new or increased tax revenue to these tourism priorities. HB 4148 would allow this to shrink to as little as 40 % — effectively redirecting a larger share to general services, including through special districts rather than directly by cities or counties.

This shift has three harmful consequences:

First, it dilutes the economic logic behind the tax. Transient lodging taxes are paid by visitors, and the strongest case for them has always been investing in the very tourism infrastructure and marketing that brought those visitors here in the first place. Reducing the required tourism share risks starving those efforts of resources.

Second, by permitting special districts to be the recipients for services “in lieu” of cities and counties, the bill adds complexity and reduces transparency. Special districts are often less visible to the public than cities and counties — and without strong safeguards, this change could diffuse accountability for how these tax dollars are spent.

Third, while the bill includes a new biennial reporting requirement, that by itself doesn’t solve the core problem: a tax with a purpose can’t be effective if the purpose is watered down. Reporting doesn’t replace strategic funding.

If this legislature’s goal is to grow Oregon’s tourism economy while maintaining clear accountability for tax revenue, then the right reform is to strengthen, not weaken, the tourism investment requirement and tie reporting to defined performance metrics. HB 4148 moves in the opposite direction.

For these reasons, I urge the committee to reject HB 4148.

Thank you,

Brian Lang  
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