Date: February 6,2026
Name: Katie Kadlub, CEO, Visit Hood River
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 Katie Kadlub, and I serve as the CEO of Visit Hood River. I'm writing on behalf of Visit Hood River and the broader tourism and hospitality industry to express strong opposition to House Bill 4134.

Tourism is not just a driver of economic activity—it is a proven tool for rural revitalization, job creation, and local investment. House Bill 4134 threatens to divert critical Transient Lodging Tax (TLT) funds away from their intended purpose, undermining the long-term vitality of Oregon's tourism economy.

It is the successful collaboration between local and regional Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) and Travel Oregon that has helped generate meaningful economic activity, even in Oregon's most rural regions. By targeting non-peak travel seasons, DMOs foster year-round visitation, promote job stability, and strengthen local economies. These programs also reflect Oregon's values by supporting community-based initiatives rooted in stewardship, sustainability, and livability.

In Hood River, TLT revenues do more than market our destination. They fund wildfire recovery, water safety education, and access to trails and recreation—investments that directly benefit both residents and visitors. Our community has used TLT funds to expand inclusive outdoor recreation, support arts and cultural programming, and improve quality of life while enhancing visitor experiences.

Now more than ever, we must safeguard the reinvestment of these funds. There's a widespread misconception that Oregon communities have fully recovered from the economic impacts of the pandemic. The data tells a different story:

- None of Oregon's seven tourism regions have regained pre-pandemic occupancy levels.
- Statewide hotel occupancy is down 7.6% compared to 2019.
- Portland—a cornerstone of Oregon's tourism economy—is down 10.6% in total hotel revenue since 2019.

The tourism industry remains vulnerable. HB 4134 would redirect TLT funds at a time when reinvestment is essential to full recovery. These dollars support critical efforts to rebuild demand, drive visitation, and stabilize local economies.

At the state level, we've seen the transformative impact of TLT investments since the 2003 Tourism Investment Proposal established Travel Oregon and protected local tourism funding. In the last 20 years:

- Visitor spending in Oregon has more than doubled—from $6.5 billion in 2003 to over $14 billion.
- State and local TLT revenues have tripled—from $200 million to $650 million.
- Visitors now spend an additional 2.7 million nights annually in Oregon hotels compared to 2008.

Oregon's tourism sector continues to outperform inflation in spending, earnings, employment, and tax revenue growth. These gains are the result of long-term strategic reinvestment in tourism—not chance.

Our rural communities cannot afford to lose momentum. HB 4134 puts at risk not just marketing programs, but the critical infrastructure, stewardship, and economic development projects that TLT currently funds.

I urge you to oppose HB 4134 and protect the integrity of Oregon's tourism economy. Your support ensures communities like ours can continue to build a strong, inclusive, and sustainable future for all Oregonians.

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

Sincerely,

Katie Kadlub

Katie Kadlub
Chief Executive Officer
Visit Hood River