

Submitter:

Dan Gibson

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB4148

Honorable Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dan Gibson, CEO of Visit McMinnville. As someone deeply involved in promoting our community, and as a resident witnessing firsthand the budget challenges we face in 2026 – from escalating costs to legacy obligations – I understand the immense pressures you are under to assist our communities in balancing their budgets.

It's precisely because these choices are so difficult that we must be clear-eyed about the consequences of measures like HB 4148. This bill, by allowing a drastic shift in the required investment for tourism promotion—from at least 70% to a mere 40%—while increasing the maximum for other city or county services to 60%, might appear like a straightforward budget solution. Respectfully, this overlooks the aggressive competition in the global and national travel market, especially in an incredibly challenging market for tourism in 2026 and beyond.

Potential visitors have endless choices. Our stunning coastlines, mountains, and cities compete daily with destinations across the country and globe that are investing heavily – often far more than Oregon – to capture traveler attention and dollars. To assume visitors will simply find their way here without consistent, strategic promotion is to cede valuable economic ground to our competitors.

Visit McMinnville's work demonstrates the power of targeted investment. Our efforts directly contribute to \$47 million in visitor spending and 430 jobs right here in our city. This economic vitality doesn't materialize out of thin air. It requires resources to develop marketing campaigns, attract conferences and events, partner with travel media, and ensure potential visitors know why McMinnville and the surrounding region should be their destination of choice.

The pattern is predictable and well-documented: when destinations cut tourism promotion, they lose visibility, visitor numbers drop, and local economies contract. Recovering that lost market share is exponentially harder and more costly than maintaining a consistent presence. Colorado's experience in the early 1990s after eliminating its tourism office serves as a stark warning – billions in lost revenue and years spent regaining ground.

HB 4148 threatens to replicate such missteps statewide. The funds diverted from the current 70% minimum would likely be absorbed into patching immediate budget

shortfalls, particularly in rural communities like mine. This forces a dangerous trade-off: sacrificing a vital engine for long-term economic development and diversification for short-term fiscal relief. This is not a sustainable path forward.

Maintaining dedicated tourism funding is not about subsidizing vacations; it's about strategic economic policy. It's an investment in showcasing Oregon's assets, supporting thousands of jobs statewide, strengthening local businesses, and generating tax revenue that benefits all Oregonians. It's about competing effectively and ensuring Oregon remains a top-tier destination.

I urge you to recognize tourism promotion for what it is: a crucial component of Oregon's economic strategy. Please oppose HB 4148 and reject this proposed reallocation that undermines the funding mechanism allowing communities like McMinnville, and indeed all of Oregon, to thrive.

Thank you.

Dan Gibson

CEO, Visit McMinnville