



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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February 11, 2026

Chair Anthony Broadman - Senate Finance and Revenue Committee,
Chair Nancy Nathanson – House Revenue Committee,
Senator Mike McLain,
Senator Todd Nash,
Representative Greg Smith, and
Representative Vikki Breese-Iverson

Dear Legislators,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input in support of SB 1562 and HB 4148, which address the critical need for flexibility in the use of local lodging tax revenues.

Jefferson County is a rural community with a population of approximately 26,000 residents. Each year, our communities welcome tens of thousands of visitors. We serve as a primary gateway to Central Oregon for Portland/Metro area travelers heading to Prineville, Redmond, Bend, Camp Sherman, Sisters, and Sunriver. We are home to a variety of recreational, cultural, and historical attractions that make Jefferson County a key contributor to Oregon's tourism economy.

We are proud of our role in supporting tourism on Oregon's sunny side of the state, but visitors also place increasing strain on our communities' essential services and infrastructure. Under current state law, the use of transient lodging tax revenues is highly restricted, requiring at least 70 percent of new or increased revenues to be dedicated exclusively to tourism promotion or tourism-related facilities. While these efforts are important, these rigid limitations do not reflect the realities facing rural communities. Our law enforcement, search & rescue (SAR), fire, and emergency medical services are responding to an increase in calls directly related to tourism. Our parks, trails, roads, and public spaces experience heavy use and require additional maintenance and investment. These impacts are real, ongoing, and borne primarily by local governments and residents.

SB 1562 and HB 4148 provide a practical and balanced solution. They would allow communities greater flexibility to address the direct impacts of tourism while continuing to support promotion efforts. This flexibility is not about diverting funds away from tourism. On the contrary, it strengthens the long-term sustainability of our tourism economy by ensuring that communities can maintain the services and infrastructure visitors rely on. We remain committed to finding balanced solutions that support both our residents and the visitors who contribute to our local economy.

We respectfully urge you to pass SB 1562 and HB 4148 to give rural communities the tools they need to sustain tourism and protect quality of life.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Mark Wunsch, Jefferson County Commissioner



Kelly Simmetink, Jefferson County Commissioner



Seth Taylor, Jefferson County Commissioner