

Submitter: Regina Picke
On Behalf Of: Wild Goose Meadows RV
Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4134

I am writing as the owner of Wild Goose Meadows RV Park in Lakeview, Oregon, to strongly oppose HB 4134, Please vote NO on HB 4134 and protect Oregon's small tourism businesses, visitors, and local economies.

My RV Park operates in a highly competitive rural market. Lakeview and the surrounding area already have at least 8 RV parks competing for the same price-sensitive travelers—campers, RVers, hunters, fishermen, and families seeking affordable outdoor experiences in Oregon's high desert and lake country. We rely heavily on transient lodging revenue to stay viable. Adding this new tax will force us to either absorb the cost (eating into already thin margins) or pass it on to guests through higher nightly rates. Either way, we lose: customers will simply book at a competing park down the road, choose a cheaper destination in California, Idaho, or Nevada, or skip the trip altogether.

RV and campground stays are especially vulnerable. They serve budget-conscious travelers who already face rising fuel prices, campground fees, and inflation. Unlike luxury hotels in urban areas, our guests comparison-shop aggressively. Industry groups like the Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association (ORLA) and multiple chambers of commerce (including those in Redmond, Springfield, and Sisters) have highlighted how this tax increase upends a long-standing compromise on transient lodging tax allocation and makes Oregon less competitive for tourism. Oregon currently ranks among the states with the lowest statewide lodging tax; doubling it sends the wrong message at a time when we should be encouraging visitors, not discouraging them.

Broader economic harm is clear:

Tourism drives jobs and revenue in rural Oregon communities like Lakeview.

Reduced bookings mean fewer dollars spent at local gas stations, restaurants, grocery stores, and outfitters.

Small businesses like mine will face higher administrative burdens collecting and remitting the extra tax, with part of it labeled a "nature conservation fee" on receipts—potentially confusing or alienating guests who expect straightforward pricing.

The increase takes effect for charges on or after January 1, 2027, but planning and reservations for 2027 are already underway. Uncertainty and higher costs will chill investment in RV parks and related businesses exactly when we need growth.

Proponents argue the ~\$38 million in new revenue will fund wildlife conservation, habitat projects, and related programs. While I support smart conservation, this should not come at the expense of the very tourism industry that brings people to enjoy Oregon's wildlife and outdoors in the first place. We already pay local property taxes, business taxes, and (in many areas) additional local transient lodging taxes.

Visitors also pay sales taxes, gas taxes, and more. This bill simply piles on more cost

without addressing underlying state spending priorities or exploring alternatives like reallocating existing general-fund dollars or cutting inefficiencies.

Oregon's tourism sector is still recovering from pandemic disruptions and economic pressures. Now is not the time to make it more expensive to visit our state—especially for the RV and camping segment that brings families and outdoor enthusiasts to every corner of Oregon, including rural areas like Lakeview.

I respectfully urge the Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue to reject HB 4134. Preserve the competitiveness of Oregon's lodging and tourism industry, support small businesses like my RV park, and reject this burdensome tax hike on visitors.

Thank you for your time and consideration.