

Submitter: Bettina Hannigan
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4134

Written Testimony on HB 4134
Submitted to the Senate Committee on Finance & Revenue

Bettina Hannigan
President & CEO, Florence Area Chamber of Commerce
Florence, Oregon
Senate District: 9

Chair and Members of the Committee,

I respectfully submit this testimony in opposition to HB 4134 on behalf of the Florence Area Chamber of Commerce, which serves as the Destination Marketing Organization for the City of Florence.

Florence is a rural coastal community of approximately 15,000 residents. We are geographically isolated—effectively an island economy bordered by the Pacific Ocean, the Siuslaw River, and forestland. We do not have diversified industry or large corporate employers to absorb economic shifts. Tourism is not supplemental in Florence. It is foundational.

Visitor spending in our region generates approximately \$280 million annually in economic activity. Tourism supports more than 50% of the jobs in our community—real jobs held by real people supporting real families. These are hospitality workers, restaurant employees, retail staff, maintenance teams, charter operators, and small business owners. When tourism thrives, Florence remains stable. When it weakens, our entire community feels it.

HB 4134 represents an \$11 million annual tax increase on Oregonians. Approximately 30% of the statewide Transient Lodging Tax is paid by Oregon residents traveling within our own state—families attending youth sporting events, business travelers, and those visiting loved ones. At a time when affordability remains a top concern, increasing this burden deserves serious reflection.

The bill also weakens Oregon's competitiveness for large events and conferences. Meeting planners compare total lodging tax rates across destinations. When our rates rise beyond competing states, those events simply choose other locations. The result is lost revenue, fewer overnight stays, and reduced economic activity—particularly in rural communities.

Most importantly, TLT investments are working. Approximately \$40 million in statewide TLT funding generates an estimated \$14 billion in economic activity—a 350-to-1 return. That return supports jobs, local payrolls, small businesses, and community stability across Oregon.

Sound public policy should be grounded in integrity and evidence. When a funding model is demonstrably producing strong economic returns and sustaining communities, the responsible course is to strengthen it—not undermine it.

Redirecting or overburdening the very mechanism that drives economic vitality in rural Oregon is short-sighted. We urge you to protect what is working and vote NO on HB 4134.

Thank you for your consideration and your service to our state.

Respectfully submitted,
Bettina Hannigan
President & CEO
Florence Area Chamber of Commerce