

February 25, 2026

## **Liz Dahlager Testimony – NO on HB 4134**

Dear Chair Broadman and members of the committee:

My name is Liz Dahlager. I'm the Chief Operating Officer and an owner of Mereté Hotel Management based in Springfield, Oregon. I have lived in Oregon for 45+ years and have worked in travel and hospitality since I was 16 in various regions across the state.

Our hotel company operates 21 branded select service hotels in small communities across Oregon—Roseburg, Grants Pass, Medford, Central Point, Eugene, Springfield, Bend, Hermiston, Hood River, and soon Florence. Across these hotels, at any time, we employ between 600 and 800 Oregonians.

This bill imposes additional tax on the hotel industry, which contributes significantly to Oregon's economy. I am writing to you today to oppose HB 4134 because:

### **1. It reduces Oregon's competitiveness and will cost our communities jobs.**

We have already heard from partners—like the University of Oregon—about the difficulty of attracting and retaining major sporting events because of existing lodging taxes and fees. If this bill passes, we can guarantee national events will look elsewhere, and we will lose significant economic impact dollars that support jobs, restaurants and locally owned retail shops.

### **2. It increases costs for Oregonians traveling within Oregon.**

This tax won't just affect visitors—it will be paid by Oregonians traveling for youth sports, family weekends at the coast or in Bend, and for business up and down I5. This is a tax on Oregonians at a time when families and residents are already struggling with inflation and minimal wage growth.

### **3. It undermines the very industry driving economic activity and establishes a dangerous precedent.**

Hospitality is one of the few segments of Oregon's economy that is performing well, even in rural communities. The coast and rural eastern Oregon generate revenue and jobs through tourism and by raising the tax this will result in hotel operators lowering their room rates to account for the additional tax. In addition, this bill will allocate funds away from an economic engine to fund non tourism related departments. That is a slippery slope and a precedent Oregonians cannot afford. It is not fiscally responsible.

We fully support thoughtful funding solutions, however, we cannot support an additional tax burden on our industry or on our neighboring businesses who rely on overnight travelers to drive economic activity.

I respectfully request that you oppose any increase in transient lodging tax at this time and that you continue to be good stewards of Oregon's tourism economy by not allocating funds outside what the current law already requires. Thank you for your service to our state and for protecting the tourism economy to ensure Oregon will welcome visitors for years to come.

Sincerely,



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