



Written Testimony in Opposition to HB 4134A

Dear Chair Broadman, Vice-Chair McLane, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jim Etzel, CEO of Sport Oregon, a statewide nonprofit sports commission dedicated to growing Oregon's economy through sports tourism, event bidding, and sports infrastructure investment. I am submitting this testimony in opposition to HB 4134A.

While Sport Oregon does not directly receive transient lodging tax revenue, our work is deeply intertwined with the health of Oregon's sports tourism ecosystem. Sport Oregon's primary work is competitive event bidding. We pitch Oregon destinations to national and international rights holders - collegiate championships, amateur athletic competitions, multi-day tournaments – for events that fill hotel rooms, restaurants, and stimulate local businesses across Oregon. When evaluating bid destinations, rights holders and event organizers scrutinize total lodging costs. Oregon is already competing against states with lower tax burdens. Raising the statewide TLT by 1.25% makes that competition harder.

In the Portland metro area specifically, the stakes are massive. Portland's current total lodging tax rate is approximately 16% per room night. HB 4134A would push that figure to 17.25%, making Portland the second-highest total lodging tax jurisdiction in the western United States, behind only Seattle. For a sports commission actively bidding multi-year, multi-hotel-block events against cities like Denver, Salt Lake City, and Sacramento, this is a direct competitive disadvantage. We will lose events, and the substantial economic activity they generate, because of this bill.

Oregon is building momentum in sports tourism. We are developing our roadmap toward hosting major national events including the 2030 NCAA Women's Final Four. We are investing in statewide sports infrastructure and working to ensure that communities beyond Portland share in the economic benefits of sports tourism. HB 4134A undermines that work at precisely the wrong moment, when Oregon most needs every competitive advantage it can secure.

The TLT system works because its revenues are reinvested in the promotional and infrastructure programs that attract visitors and generate measurable economic returns. Diverting those revenues to unrelated purposes breaks the cycle that makes the system effective. Any proposed TLT increase should be developed in true partnership with the tourism industry and integrated into a long-term economic strategy.

For the sake of Oregon's sports tourism economy and the communities that depend on it, I urge you to vote NO on HB 4134A.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Etzel

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