



## Written Testimony in Opposition to HB 4148A

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 4148A as currently written.

Sport Oregon does not receive lodging tax revenue directly. However, the work we do - bidding on and securing sporting events for Oregon communities - depends entirely on a well-functioning tourism promotion system that is adequately resourced. Our funding partners, including Travel Portland, rely on TLT revenues to support destination marketing and sports event development. Anything that weakens their capacity to invest in those programs weakens our ability to compete for the events that drive real economic returns.

We recognize and appreciate the compromise work reflected in HB 4148A to achieve a more balanced distribution of local lodging tax revenues. The progress toward a 50/50 split between tourism investment and General Fund use is a meaningful step, and we support the collaborative spirit that produced it.

However, the inclusion of 'resiliency grants for small businesses' as an eligible use of funds designated for tourism promotion and facilities is deeply concerning. This language is undefined and unbounded. It creates an opening for local jurisdictions to redirect funds away from the tourism investment infrastructure that makes Oregon competitive as a sports destination, with no parameters, no accountability measures, and no requirement that those dollars serve the visitors who generated them.

Sport Oregon bids on events where rights holders evaluate not just the venue and the weather, but the destination's commitment to sports tourism investment. A perception that Oregon communities are deprioritizing tourism infrastructure sends the wrong message at the wrong time. We are pursuing major national events and are planning for the 2030 NCAA Women's Final Four. This requires a strong, predictable TLT investment framework, not one vulnerable to broad reinterpretation.

The nearly 200,000 Oregonians working in tourism and hospitality deserve policy that is deliberate, well-constructed, and protective of the system that sustains their livelihoods. We ask that the Legislature allow time to craft TLT policy that reflects the input of the tourism industry and serves both Oregon communities and the visitors who fuel our economy.

Please vote NO on HB 4148A, and allow the collaborative process underway to continue toward a more durable outcome.

Respectfully submitted,

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