



RE: Opposition to HB 4148

Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue

You must oppose HB 4148 and its -7 amendments to safeguard dedicated tourism funding and protect the local economies that rely on it.

While we can live with the 50-50 compromise reflected in the bill, we strongly oppose the creation of "resilience grants" funded through the Transient Lodging Tax (TLT). Redirecting these dollars away from tourism promotion undermines the very purpose for which this tax was created.

The TLT is a self-imposed tax on the tourism industry. It was established with a clear and straightforward intent: to reinvest lodging tax revenue into tourism promotion and related efforts that grow the visitor economy. Recognizing this purpose can help you see how vital it is to protect these funds for our communities' prosperity.

Our local small businesses do not need handouts; they need customers. Restaurants, retailers, lodging operators, guides, and attractions depend on a steady flow of visitors to survive, especially in rural communities where tourism is a primary economic driver. Every dollar diverted from tourism promotion threatens their livelihood and community vitality.

HB 4148 already significantly reduces the funding available for tourism promotion at both the local and state levels. The -7 amendments go even further, shifting more dollars away from the programs that generate economic activity, local jobs, and tax revenue. Protecting these funds is essential for our communities' growth and competitiveness.

Tourism operates on a reinvestment model: revenue from visitor funds and promotion attracts more visitors, which in turn generates more revenue. This proven system supports rural communities and the entire state. Diverting these funds threatens stability and undermines trust in our long-standing funding framework.

Tourism dollars should be used to support tourism. Protecting the integrity of the TLT ensures sustainable economic development, thriving small businesses, and resilient local communities.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to oppose HB 4148 and the -7 amendments.
Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

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