

February 27, 2026

Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301



RE: Oppose HB 4134, relating to the increase in state transient lodging tax;

Chair Broadman, Vice-Chair McLane, and Members of the Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue:

My name is Eli Matthews and I'm the President & CEO of The Chamber of Medford & Jackson County, representing more than 1,100 businesses in Southern Oregon. I am writing on behalf of the Board of Directors for The Chamber in opposition of HB 4134, which proposes an increase in the statewide Transient Lodging Tax.

Travel Medford, a department of The Chamber serving as the official Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for the City of Medford, successfully collaborates with local business, regional DMOs and Travel Oregon to generate year-round economic activity and new jobs across Oregon. The statewide Transient Lodging Tax (TLT) was established in 2003 through the Tourism Investment Proposal with a clear purpose of growing the state's tourism economy through Travel Oregon's focused efforts and marketing the state as a premier travel destination.

Over the past 21 years, the return on investment from TLT has supported tourism promotion and tourism-related facility development that attracts new and repeat visitors to communities throughout the state. In that timeframe, visitor spending in Oregon has more than doubled from \$6.5 billion to \$14.3 billion in 2024. Jackson County has similar results, seeing visitor expenditures increasing from \$352 million in 2003 to \$730 million in 2024.

I recognize the pressing demand for funding of statewide programs; however, diverting TLT funds to non-tourism-related purposes jeopardizes economic security and limits Oregon's economic growth potential. Diluting the lodging tax purpose undermines the engine designed to fuel Oregon's tourism economy and Travel Oregon has a proven track record of delivering measurable returns on investment from tourism promotion, preserving tourism as a sustainable economic driver.

We appreciate that Oregon's natural resources can be a draw for tourists, but the existing conservation efforts of the state currently have a myriad of funding sources, and the intended purpose of the TLT for tourism promotion should not be diluted. Maintaining the current TLT structure and purpose supports Oregon's economic prosperity and protects the investment of local tourism marketing and development programs that increase visitation, generate spending in our communities and supports year-round employment. All of which contribute to a thriving community and state.

We urge you to oppose HB 4134 and continue to strategically invest in tourism by allowing TLT to be utilized for its intended purpose and not for adding to the existing funding Oregon's conservation strategy.

Sincerely,

Eli Matthews, IOM
President & CEO
The Chamber of Medford & Jackson County