



February 27, 2026

Bill Number and Committee: HB 4148A – Testimony to the Senate Finance Committee on Finance and Revenue

Dear Chair Broadman, Vice Chair McLane, and members of the Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue,

On behalf of the Willamette Valley Visitors Association (WVVA), I respectfully submit testimony in opposition to House Bill 4148A. **As written, this bill functions as a backdoor mechanism to defund local destination marketing organizations and fundamentally alters long-standing transient lodging tax policy without the time, collaboration, or care such changes deserve.**

WVVA represents communities, lodging providers, and visitor-facing businesses across seven counties in the Willamette Valley (SW Clackamas, Yamhill, Marion, Polk, Linn, Benton and non-coastal Lane counties). Our role is to support sustainable tourism as an economic development tool—one that creates jobs, supports small businesses, and helps communities reinvest in infrastructure, facilities, and quality of life improvements that benefit both residents and visitors. **WVVA does not receive local lodging tax revenues, which allows me to speak on behalf of local DMOs that may not be in a position to oppose legislation advanced by their own funding jurisdictions.**

WVVA opposes HB 4148A because it was not developed through the collaborative process that has historically guided Oregon's tourism policy. **The foundational commitments made to the tourism industry during the 2003 Transient Lodging Tax reforms were absent from the development of this bill**, particularly in the context of a short legislative session. **The result is a rushed and confusing proposal that takes a short-sighted approach to Oregon's long-term economic health.**

Most concerning is the addition of **"Resiliency Grants"** through a late House amendment. **This language was introduced just hours before the bill moved out of committee, with no opportunity for DMOs or industry partners to review, ask questions, or provide public input.** While supporting small businesses is an important goal, the amendment contains no boundaries or guardrails and unintentionally pits DMOs against their own restaurant and lodging partners to compete for the same limited pool of tourism dollars.

As written, the amendment allows cities and counties, at their sole discretion, to fully divert funds historically dedicated to tourism promotion and management. There are no minimum requirements, caps, or protections to ensure destination marketing and management programs remain viable. This fundamentally changes how local transient lodging taxes may be used and disregards the long-standing agreements that underpin Oregon's tourism funding framework.

Although HB 4148A is intended to help a *small* number of jurisdictions facing general fund challenges, sweeping statewide changes to lodging tax law are not the right solution. With 36 counties and hundreds of collecting cities, and no comprehensive data source tracking how each jurisdiction uses these funds, it is impossible to accurately predict the impacts of this legislation. Decisions of this magnitude should not be made without complete data and careful analysis. Local lodging tax structures are best evaluated and adjusted at the community level, not through broad statewide mandates.

Tourism remains one of Oregon's top revenue generators at a time when the state is seeking ways to address funding shortfalls. Nearly 200,000 Oregonians work in tourism statewide, including more than 23,000 in the seven-county Willamette Valley region. It is perilous to divert funding away from destination marketing and management—the very work that drives visitation, generates outside spending, and sustains these jobs.

DMOs want to collaborate with state and local partners to develop effective, responsible, and long-term tourism strategies. That work requires an open, transparent, and deliberate process to review and refine local transient lodging tax investments. Rushing such significant policy changes through a short session undermines that shared goal.

For these reasons, we respectfully **ask for a no vote on HB 4148A**. At a minimum, the bill must be amended to remove the "Resiliency Grants" language and allow time for meaningful collaboration with the tourism industry.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and service to Oregon.

Sincerely,

*Tori Middelstadt*

Tori Middelstadt  
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Willamette Valley Visitors Association