

Submitter: Jose Gonzalez
On Behalf Of: La Familia Cider
Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4134

I am a local small biz owner who depends on every single person who visits our area. It doesn't seem like the organizations who help increase tourism in our area are asking for this increase, usually that is why a policy like this would be needed. They are short funds, for whatever reason, and then advocate for more funding to close the gap between what they currently have and what they believe they need to truly meet their desired outcomes. In this case, they are not asking for it, so it was hard for me to understand why this was happening but then once I paired this with HB4148 I figured it out.

We heard good news about more people moving to Oregon, that is good, but we don't yet know the reasons why. Snowbirds coming in? Young families? Remote workers? We still don't know but what we do know is how much harder it is to stay in business in Oregon. I am a lifelong Oregonian and I have never seen so much pessimism in the small business community, and entrepreneurs are usually the most optimistic people. It's pretty much one of the "requirements" to start a business. I don't have a lot of time to write this, it was only because my next appt cancelled, but I think I know the reason funds are being diverted to departments that have nothing to do with tourism. I think it's because those departments would otherwise not have enough funding. So instead of making the tough decisions to make cuts, like the ones I'm literally making today that affect the livability of my family, the funds are taken from a vulnerable source and act as a band aid so nobody knows how bad things are.

Lastly I want to let you know making the decision to work with less funding doesn't feel as bad as you would think, I assume at least 70% of asks to the capital are for more money, so I don't blame you. The issue is what I learned is there is never enough money, it is rarely the solution. I served on the Salem City Council and every year we had to make cuts, it was hard but it led to us finding small ways and then pass a large levy to increase funding. The reason it passed was because the community saw everything we did to do the best we could with less funding and then when they were offered to partner with us, they did! Thank you.