



Chair Broadman, Vice Chair McLane and honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue.

My name is Alana Hughson. While Mackenzie Ballard, Managing Director for the Oregon Destination Association (ODA) is out on emergency maternity leave, I have been asked to be the voice for ODA's nearly one hundred Destination Management Organizations (DMOs), and the seven tourism regions who are members of ODA.

Central Oregon has been my home for more than 50 years. I grew up in a family hotel business that built the foundation for my career in tourism for the past three decades. As the CEO for Visit Central Oregon (VCO) for twenty-five years, from 1993 to 2018, I was directed to establish programs to help transition Central Oregon's economy from a declining wood products industry to a vibrant and diverse economic base.

During my tenure with Visit Central Oregon, I was appointed by the Governor to serve on the Oregon Tourism Commission for eight years (2010 – 2018). I can attest that Oregon's economic vitality has been largely driven by successful tourism reinvestment at the local and state level, and we cannot afford HB 4148A to unintentionally derail the continuation of that important work.

Local transient lodging taxes were established to stimulate visitation, directly leading to visitor spending, and jobs creation. This formula is working, and Oregon has seen enormous benefit from our DMO tourism reinvestment. We are facing volatile economic times that are unprecedented. We simply cannot afford to undermine destination management programs that are so vital to sustaining local communities.

HB 4148A has the potential to kill the DMO's who are the geese laying the golden eggs in their tourism communities. Specifically, the language adding 'business resiliency grants' will allow cities and counties to defund community destination marketing organizations at their discretion.

We know this was not the intent of the amendment, and we call for your help to fix it. The 'resiliency grants' language added to HB 4148A fundamentally alters how local transient lodging taxes can be used. Policy changes of this magnitude require transparency, deliberation, and meaningful public engagement. Presently there are no safeguards—such as ceilings, guardrails, or minimum funding requirements for the 'resiliency grants'.

The 'resiliency grants' language will pit DMO's against their community restaurant and hotel partners to compete for funding from the 50% of TLT dedicated to tourism in HB

4148A. Loosely defined statewide legislation is not the appropriate tool for issues that require community-specific solutions and HB 4148A is counterproductive to our shared goals for Oregon.

DMOs work with state and local partners to develop effective, responsible, and long-term tourism strategies. It is essential to have an open and deliberate process to review local transient lodging tax distributions that are so vital to Oregon's economic prosperity.

Please remove the 'resiliency grants' language from HB 4148A. If this language is not removed, *please vote NO on HB 4148A.*

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

Alana Hughson *for* Mackenzie Ballard

Oregon Destination Association