



Date: February 28, 2026

Name: Katharine Cato, Travel Ashland

Bill Number and Committee: HB 4148A testimony to the Senate Finance and Revenue Committee

Dear Members of the Senate Finance and Revenue Committee,

My name is Katharine Cato and I am the Director of Travel Ashland. I also serve as Treasurer of Travel Southern Oregon and Oregon Destination Association boards.

I appreciate the opportunity to convey my opposition to HB 4148A, specifically the amendment to create 'resiliency grants' for small businesses. The language was added to HB 4148 at the last minute in committee, before the bill was passed out of the House Revenue last week. DMO's were not apprised of this amended language adding 'resiliency grants' in advance, and we had no opportunity to testify about the unintended impacts of the 'resiliency grants' language. It is imperative that the Senate committee amend the bill to remove the 'resiliency grants' language.

This amendment potentially pits local Chambers and DMOs against our tourism related businesses and stakeholder partners for available funding.

The resiliency grants are available for restaurants and lodging. What does this mean for other tourism-related businesses like activity providers or arts and culture businesses? How do DMOs or local governments explain why they were excluded? How do we define the size of the grants, define what is considered resiliency, or what is considered a small business? With no answers to this, the amendment needs to be opposed.

Many DMOs and the RDMOs already manage grant programming for their communities. This work is already being done, and creating an additional program with HB 4148 would be **redundant**.

Tourism revenues are an effective economic engine however they require continued investment and now more than ever we need to retain our market share to be a competitive visitor destination as a state and educate new visitors.

While we understand the pressing demands to fund a myriad of statewide programs, Oregon cannot afford to tax its way to a sustainable economy; we must be committed to *growing* our way to a sustainable economy. Transient lodging tax is intended to be

reinvested in communities to help grow local economies in support for Oregon's overall health and economic vitality.

Opposing HB 4148A is essential to ensure that tourism destinations and DMOs remain viable. Defeat HB 4148A and help us continue to strategically plan and invest in projects and partnerships that are vital to Oregon's economic future.

Thank you for the privilege to submit this testimony in opposition.

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