



March 1, 2026

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

RE: Oppose House Bill 4148-A

Dear 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 1,100 businesses in Southern Oregon. I am writing on behalf of the Board of Directors for The Chamber in opposition of HB 4148, which would change the split of allowable uses of net local Transient Lodging Tax (TLT), as well as opposition to the -7 amendments, adopted February 19, 2026. This letter is supplemental to our initial opposition to HB 4148 submitted February 9, 2026.

The purpose of TLT is to drive economic growth and job creation across the state, thereby strengthening communities through visitor spending. Changing the existing TLT formula for allowable uses by diverting more funds to non-tourism-related purposes jeopardizes economic security and limits Oregon's economic growth potential. A strong tourism economy keeps businesses thriving, which sustains vital tax revenue for municipalities that already fund essential city services and community infrastructure.

TLT is a proven and effective tool for economic development. In Medford, we have witnessed how the proper utilization of TLT and strong public-private partnerships leads to an investment in building tourism-related facilities such as the Rogue Credit Union Community Complex (Rogue X). The constant dialogue and collaboration between the local municipality and the private sector have ignited an era of tourism development in our community – and everyone benefits. Three new hotels are planned to open by 2027, and Medford residents passed a local TLT bill in November for the purpose of building a conference/meeting facility as the linchpin attraction for a \$500 million conceptual project – the largest public-private partnership in Jackson County history. The project is expected to transform the City of Medford, its downtown area and increase visitor expenditures during non-peak tourist season, sparking economic advancement, not only the tourism and hospitality sector, but the city the city and region. Reducing the investment that drives visitor demand limits opportunity, and small businesses and local governments become less successful.

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We have additional concerns about the impact of the -7 amendment. The creation of so-called 'resiliency grants' for tourism related businesses raises significant questions. This concept does not appear to have been thoroughly vetted and could allow cities and counties to defund DMO's (Destination Marketing Organizations) at their discretion. The creation of such a system may also pit DMO's against longstanding partners in the travel and tourism space. This is increasingly significant in Oregon's smaller communities. We strongly feel this is counterproductive to the success of tourism in the state, and with no firm boundaries, we have concerns about the management of such a fund. 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 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.

Maintaining the current TLT formula 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 a thriving state.

We urge you to oppose HB 4148 and continue to strategically invest in tourism by allowing TLT to be utilized for its intended purpose.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Eli Matthews', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eli Matthews, IOM

President & CEO

The Chamber of Medford & Jackson County