



March 1, 2026

Chair and members of the committee,

My name is Samara Phelps, and I serve as President and CEO of Travel Lane County. I am submitting this written testimony in opposition to HB 4148.

HB 4148 eliminates all historical splits that dedicate funding for tourism promotion and tourism-related facilities. Within the allocation to tourism promotion, a last-minute amendment added funding for an additional program, resiliency grants for small businesses in the restaurant and lodging industry. **An amendment is needed to remove this undefined resiliency grant provision.**

The inclusion of this program changes the definition of allowed tourism expenditures. Reducing the dedicated tourism percentage from 70% to 50% while broadening the definition of allowable uses by adding a new program materially changes the structure of the lodging tax framework that has supported a tourism economy in Oregon for over 20 years and for decades longer in many communities.

Tourism development funding is designed to generate demand. It supports marketing, event recruitment and destination competitiveness — activities responsive to individual community needs that bring new visitors and new spending into our communities.

As a last-minute amendment in committee last week, DMOs, chambers and other stakeholders had no opportunity to testify about the unintended impacts of the 'resiliency grants' language. Industry did not ask for this amendment. It is undefined without guardrails or limits. It provided no definition to what qualifies as resiliency, small or how other tourism-related businesses like activity providers or arts are to be addressed. If resiliency support is needed, it should be addressed through a funding mechanism designed specifically for that purpose, with clear standards and accountability.

It is also important to be clear that HB 4148 does not create new revenue. It reallocates existing lodging tax revenue. For decades, TLT has been a reliable funding source for community assets including Lane County History Museum, Hult Center for the Performing Arts, Lane County Parks, Florence Event Center, Lowell Covered Bridge and Oakridge events. Reallocating TLT and creating a new program reduces or eliminate funding available for these valued assets.

If changes to how that revenue is used reduce visitation or discourage future bookings, the result is a smaller revenue base over time and fewer resources available for all priorities, including those the bill seeks to address. To support stable, predictable funding for tourism promotion and infrastructure that ensures a sustainable fund for every program funded through TLT, it is imperative that the Senate committee amend the bill to remove the 'resiliency grants' language.

For these reasons, Travel Lane County respectfully urges the committee to protect the integrity of transient lodging tax and remove the resiliency grants.

Respectfully submitted,

*Samara Phelps*

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President & CEO