



Tillamook County Board of Commissioners

201 Laurel Avenue, Tillamook, OR 97141

Phone: 503-842-3403

Erin D. Skaar, Chair

Paul Fournier, Vice-Chair

Mary Faith Bell, Commissioner

March 19, 2025

Chair Tran, Vice Chairs Grayber and Lewis, members of the Committee, for the record my name is **Erin Skaar and I am a Commissioner in Tillamook County**. I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 3556.

You have likely heard me, or other county commissioners, say that when you have seen one county, you have seen one county. I feel like this is a very apropos time to use that statement. The bill we are talking about today **extends the permissible uses of net revenue from a transient lodging tax**. It does **not require** any county or city to change what they are doing if it is **working for their community**.

You are receiving testimony in opposition to this bill from many areas of the state. They are expressing that this is not the right move for them, and I can understand that. But remember, this bill is not a mandate on how any county or city spends their transient lodging tax but is rather an opportunity to support each community in making their own individual decisions that best meet their needs and the needs of their visitors.

In Tillamook County we have more than enough tourist traffic. Our population balloons from 27,500 full-time residents to over 150,000 people on any given weekend during the spring and summer months. I am guessing that some of you may have even experienced that personally. If not, come see us in July! The Oregon Coast is a great tourist location and while we definitely understand the importance of this industry to our economy, it has some challenges. For example, our Sheriff's department that is funded solely by the general fund of our county, is simply inadequate to also address the needs of our visitors without some further investment.

Data on the north coast has shown that roughly 30-40% of our vehicle accidents, crimes, and jail residents are people from outside of our counties. This is a large burden for local government to manage and our communities to pay for through their taxes. All while we are being asked to spend 70% of our TLT on more promotions that we simply don't need in our communities.

This bill is a very flexible answer in that **it is not a mandate for any county or city to utilize their transient lodging tax differently than they do now**, if it is working for them. Instead, this bill allows each county and city the flexibility to meet the greatest needs of their residents and visitors through additional optional uses of the funding where needed.

I urge the committee to schedule HB 3556 for a work session and vote yes on this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Erin Skaar".

Erin Skaar, Chair

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