



Crook County

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March 20, 2025

To: House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans

Re: Language Clarification Request in Support of HB 3556 – Extending Permissible Uses of Transient Lodging Tax

Dear Chair Tran, Vice-Chairs Grayber and Lewis, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to endorse House Bill 3556, which allows broader use of net revenue from local transient lodging taxes. This bill is essential for Crook County, as it balances the needs of a robust tourism industry with critical public services and infrastructure.

Central Oregon, a hub for visitors, experiences substantial demands on public safety and infrastructure. Current limitations on transient lodging tax revenue restrict our ability to address these needs effectively. House Bill 3556 crucially expands permissible uses of these funds to include public safety and infrastructure, beyond just tourism promotion.

This legislation offers the flexibility needed for Crook County to enhance services such as fire, EMS, police, and to upgrade water, waste management, and transportation systems crucial for our community's welfare.

During the testimony on March 20, 2025, several objections were raised by opponents regarding the use of gas taxes paid by tourists to compensate communities for infrastructure costs. However, it is important to clarify that in the State of Oregon, the distribution of gas taxes is based on population in cities and vehicle registrations in counties, rather than the volume of gallons sold within a county. Consequently, there are no additional infrastructure funds derived from tourism activities in communities.

House Bill 3556 does not mandate financial reallocation but allows us to meet our specific local needs. This bill is a step forward for Crook County, ensuring it remains a secure and hospitable environment for both residents and visitors.

Your support for this bill will significantly contribute to the vitality and safety of our communities. Thank you for considering this important legislation.

Sincerely,

X Seth Crawford

Seth Crawford
County Commissioner