

March 20, 2025

Representative Thuy Tran, Chair  
House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court St. NE, Salem, OR 97301

**RE: Salem Chamber Written Testimony in Opposition of HB 3556**

Dear Chair Tran, Vice-Chair Grayber, Vice-Chair Lewis, and Members of the House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans,

Our organization represents over one thousand (1,000+) local businesses and forty-five thousand (45,000) employees in the Salem area. The breadth and diversity of industries represented by our membership demonstrate an intersection of the small businesses that collectively create our state economy. The Salem Chamber supports a healthy business climate, strong public safety, and infrastructure development, but opposes changing the objectives of the Transient Lodging Tax ("TLT").

Oregon's TLT was designed to reinvest into our tourism promotion and destination development. This program has been successful in incentivizing visitor and tourist spending in our local economies creating employment opportunities and increasing state revenue. In the Salem area alone, visitor spending generates \$782 million per year and supports 7,500 local jobs.

Diverting funds generated from the TLT would diminish the success of the program, making Oregon less competitive for tourism. It would disincentivize Oregon as a destination for conventions, outdoor sporting recreation, agritourism, and major event attractions with a significant departure from the original objective of the TLT program by diverting funds for public safety and infrastructure. Many local Chambers of Commerce rely upon the TLT funding for visitor centers and dissemination of travel information. This crucial service promotes tourist destinations and attractions, as well as generating activity for the ancillary businesses, which all provide jobs in our communities.

Public safety and infrastructure are essential government functions, but using TLT funds will likely have diminished returns as tourism promotion becomes underfunded hindering the very industry tasked as a new revenue stream. Please reconsider HB 3556 as drafted and fund public safety and infrastructure elsewhere.

Respectfully,



Tom Hoffert, CEO Salem Area Chamber of Commerce

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