



March 20, 2025

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

From: Deanna Palm, President and CEO of the Washington County Chamber of Commerce

Re: Opposition to House Bill 3556

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

On behalf of the Washington County Chamber of Commerce, I am writing to express our **strong opposition to HB 3556**, which proposes expanding the use of Transient Lodging Tax (TLT) revenues beyond their original intent. The TLT was established to market and promote Oregon's hospitality industry, driving tourism and economic growth. Redirecting these funds to public safety, while an important issue, undermines the purpose of TLT and will negatively impact tourism-related businesses across our communities.

Tourism is a crucial economic driver for Washington County and the state of Oregon. The TLT supports efforts to attract visitors who generate revenue for local businesses, restaurants, cultural attractions, and hotels. These visitors contribute significantly to our economy through direct spending, which extends beyond lodging to include dining, retail, transportation, and entertainment. Events and festivals play a role in community engagement, but the majority of attendees are local residents who already contribute to public safety funding through other tax channels.

The Washington County Chamber of Commerce is committed to attracting visitors, conferences, and events to our region, increasing economic opportunities for local businesses. Strong destination marketing efforts and a well-supported visitor center help bring new customers to our hotels, restaurants, and retail shops, driving revenue growth across the community. Redirecting funds intended to support tourism-related initiatives could limit our ability to effectively promote Washington County as a premier destination, ultimately reducing visitor spending and the economic benefits that tourism brings to our small businesses and workforce.

The economic return on investment from tourism promotion is undeniable. Since the establishment of the statewide TLT, Oregon has seen exponential growth in visitor spending, benefiting both rural and urban communities. **HB 3556 would divert funds meant to amplify our state's tourism industry, putting long-term economic growth at risk.** We urge you to protect the integrity of the TLT and oppose this measure.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully yours,
Deanna Palm