

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY
SUBMITTED FOR
APRIL 9, 2025
CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

A Fair Share for Tourism

What is TLT?

In 2013 Tillamook County voters enacted a transient lodging tax (TLT) of 10% to be paid by visitors who stay overnight in lodging properties. If approved by voters, Ballot Measure 29-183 will increase the TLT rate to 12% on September 1, 2025, and to 14% on July 1, 2026.

A Brief History of TLT

In 2013, Tillamook County had the worst roads in Oregon and lacked the funding to fix them. The Board of County Commissioners believed that a transient lodging tax would shore up the road department budget and help improve our road system. Voters approved TLT, which now makes up one third of the road department budget, and today the county's road system is no longer the worst in Oregon.

Who pays the TLT?

Visitors to our county who stay overnight in a hotel, motel, vacation rental, campground or other overnight accommodation pay the tax.

Where does the money go?

TLT in Tillamook County currently generates approximately \$7.5 million annually. By state law, 70% of TLT collected must be used for tourism-related facilities, projects, and promotion. Local governments have discretion over how to spend the remaining 30%, which Tillamook County dedicates to roads.

Why is Tillamook County asking voters to increase the rate?

With 75 miles of beautiful coastline and tourist attractions such as the Tillamook Creamery, an estimated 2.5 million tourists visit Tillamook County annually, placing a significant burden on county public safety services. Due to decreasing timber revenues, Tillamook County's current budget cannot keep up with rising costs and demand for services. It is not fair to place the entire cost of providing services to our visitors on full-time residents.

If approved by voters, how will the NEW funds be spent?

The current 10% TLT revenue will continue to be spent as it is now, with 30% going to the roads department. The 4% increase may result in approximately \$3 million annually. By law, 70% (\$2.1 million) will be spent on tourism-related facilities, projects, and promotion. Of the 30% (\$900,000) over which the county has discretionary spending, an anticipated 80% (\$720,000) will be directed to the Tillamook County Sheriff's Office budget to help maintain current service levels. Ten percent (\$90,000) will help support the emergency management department, and the final 10% (\$90,000) will help maintain the county's new public safety radio system.

What about our cities?

Cities can raise their TLT rates to 11% and 13% following implementation of the county's plan. That decision is entirely up to the respective city councils. One percent will continue to go to Tillamook County. TLT funds from our cities currently account for about 7% of the total county TLT funding.

How does the proposed TLT compare with other tourist destinations in Oregon?

The current TLT rate is 12% in tourist destinations in Lincoln County and Clatsop County.

Does the State of Oregon collect TLT?

Yes. All properties providing overnight accommodations in Oregon collect 1.5% of the room rate. That is in addition to any local room tax. That tax helps fund the Oregon Tourism Commission.

How is the TLT collected and managed?

TLT is collected by lodging operators at the time of payment. Lodging operators may keep 5% of the total to help cover their expenses of collection. TLT is a part of the county's annual budget process.

Why doesn't the Tillamook County Commission just raise the tax?

Because the tax was approved by voters in 2013. Any change must also be approved by voters.

Why doesn't the county change the 70/30 split?

Only state legislators can change the law that governs how TLT revenues can be spent.

What happens if voters do not approve an increase in the TLT?

Tillamook County will do the best it can with available resources and look for ways to generate new revenue and increase efficiency. The reality of the county budget is that timber revenues are declining, and expenses are increasing. To continue to provide the services that Tillamook County residents need, and 2.5 million visitors require when they are here, the county must generate more revenue. Without an increase to the TLT rate, or a change to the law that governs how that revenue must be spent, the burden on the county from our visitors will be largely placed on current residents and taxpayers.

Why doesn't the county move TLT from the road department to solve the budget problem?

In a recent interview in the Headlight Herald, the director of the Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association stated that Tillamook County could solve the budget problem by redirecting TLT revenue that is currently allocated to the roads department to the Sheriff's Office. This view is shortsighted and fallacious in that removing revenue from the road department budget would just recreate a problem that TLT solved, in other words, the county would be 'robbing Peter to save Paul.'

***If you are still reading, thank you! Please vote yes on 29-183
and help the county solve its budget problem by asking
visitors to pay their fair share for services they receive when
they are here.***

Paid for by A Fair Share for Tourism Political Action Committee (PAC)

To contribute to the PAC, please visit <https://secure.anedot.com/a-fair-share-for-tourism/donate>

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Rockaway Beach

Rockaway Beach City Council

April 9, 2025

This year we have seen many ^{financial} changes, and many people have had to adjust to them - sometimes a little or sometimes a lot. In being involved in various organizations, it occurred to me that every single one has had to adjust - most to the extreme.

Being rural can be a challenge because even a small change in budget or logistics, parts or demands, ~~has an~~ can have an outsize impact and fewer options to adjust.

Perhaps it might be helpful to keep our community informed about how ~~are~~ Rockaway Beach is being affected, if at all, what we think might be affected, if we do, and how prepared we are to face these changes, if they occur.

To be specific:

- Have any grants, loans - anything financial been cut or frozen? Perhaps the

Watershed funding or Highway 201 improvements? Middle or Worker housing? Neah-Kah-Nie school district or those in the fishery industry who live here? Tourism and recreation data seems quite possible, perhaps the Salmonberry Trail?

2) How have we or will we meet those changes? Postpone or cancel projects? Juggle our budget? Question the decisions made by asking the source to reconsider their decision or plan?

3) How will we communicate any changes or adjustments to the community? Our neighbors may want to comment or share ideas about these or potential changes and adjustments. The city works for them so how can we stay informed and make decisions in their, our, best interests?

RB is scrappy and can-do. Many partners are as well, yet they've had funds frozen and staff laid-off. Let's just start small to cope with our present and future — NOAA, Depts like Agriculture, Education, Health — perhaps in the future, please.

Let's make sure we're prepared and communicating. We are pretty good at it.