

# OREGON TOURISM COMMISSION MEETING

May 7, 2025

Virtual Meeting

**Tourism Commissioners present included:** Chair DiNovo, Vice Chair Willitts and Commissioners Travis Hill, Harish Patel, Jenifer Roe, David Gremmels, David Penilton, and Scott Youngblood. Commissioner Stephenson was unable to join the meeting.

## **Welcome and Introductions**

Chair DiNovo opens the meeting at 9:00 a.m. and welcomes everyone to the May 7, 2025, Oregon Tourism Commission meeting.

Chair DiNovo thanks everyone for being together virtually, noting that the meeting materials, including the agenda and supplemental materials can be found on the Travel Oregon Industry website.

Chair DiNovo states that in holding a meeting today, all Public Meeting notice requirements required by state law were met.

The Oregon Tourism Commissioners and Todd Davidson, CEO of Travel Oregon, introduce themselves.

Chair DiNovo states that the purpose of today's meeting is to hear public comment on the draft Travel Oregon 2025-2027 Strategic Plan.

## **Chair Remarks**

Chair DiNovo shares that it is National Travel and Tourism Week when we celebrate the value of tourism across the state and nation.

## **Partners and Public Statements**

Chair DiNovo states that on Thursday, April 17, the Commission meeting notice was posted to the Commission Meetings webpage, notice was sent through Industry Communications and a link to the meeting agendas was posted.

Chair DiNovo reminds the group that draft Strategic Plan was posted publicly, shared with the Commission, and with tourism partners Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association and Oregon Destination Association, according to Oregon statute, and regional tourism and tribal partners on April 17.

Chair DiNovo reminds attendees that the public hearing is intentionally scheduled in the middle of the public comment period so comments can be considered by Travel Oregon staff and the Commission ahead of the June 10 Commission Meeting.



Chair DiNovo opens the public hearing.

**David Zielke, Port of Portland**

David asks the Commission to consider reopening the Large Competitive Grant process to aid in the Port of Portland's efforts to recruit direct air service to Asia. The focus is on Seoul, South Korea, and their 66 single connections with Korean Air, a partner of Delta Air Lines. Asian visitor spending will represent 29% in Oregon by 2029 according to Tourism Economics.

Chair DiNovo acknowledges that the comments will be taken into consideration.

**Alana Carollo, Eastern Oregon Visitors Association**

Alana shares the Eastern Oregon coverage area and how current Regional Destination Management Organization funding through the Regional Cooperative Tourism Program is not sufficient to provide human capacity and marketing needs for partners. Alana continues to ask the Commission to raise the funding floor from \$400,000 to \$600,000 for FY26 and to set up a process to regularly review the RCTP funding floor and implement a growth model.

Alana shares that RCTP funding has been leveraged to garner more resources, especially the RARE AmeriCorps program, but this program is at risk following the Department of Government Efficiency's cuts to the AmeriCorps program.

Chair DiNovo acknowledges the comments.

**Lizzie Keenan and Ithaca Janzen, Experience Mt. Hood and the Gorge**

Lizzie and Ithaca ask the Commission to consider raising the region's RCTP funding from \$400,000 to \$600,000 starting in FY26 and to set up a process to regularly review the RCTP funding floor and implement a growth model.

Lizzie and Ithaca share that the region's proximity to Portland contributes to high day-use which compound destination management needs.

Chair DiNovo acknowledges the comments.

Chair DiNovo states that no written comments have been submitted as of the meeting date. The public comment period remains open until 5 p.m. on Friday, May 16.

Chair DiNovo closes the public hearing.

**Other Business**

Commissioner Youngblood shares his appreciation for those who shared testimony today.



Commissioner Gremmels thanks the presenters and the support of Travel Oregon's mission and vision. He asks for the source of information to review the possible benefits of Asian visitors and the numbers of visitors to the Mt. Hood and Columbia Gorge region.

Chair DiNovo thanks for the presenters.

Todd Davidson shares his gratitude for the presenters. He continues to address economic uncertainty and its opportunity for what we can accomplish in Oregon. Over his career at Travel Oregon, we have provided innovation and will continue to do so over the next biennium and how it will impact the remaining years in the current 10-Year Strategic Vision.

Chair DiNovo shares that the next Oregon Tourism Commission meeting will be June 9 & 10 in Enterprise.

Chair DiNovo adjourns the meeting at 9:40 a.m.