



THE DALLES AREA
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
"This Chamber Means Business"

June 3, 2024

Dear Oregon Tourism Commission,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my thoughts on the critical decision regarding the lead tourism (RDMO) contract for the Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge Region.

I am Lisa Farquharson, CEO of The Dalles Area Chamber of Commerce, and I want to emphasize the urgency and importance of making a timely and well-considered decision regarding the selection of the agency to manage the Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge Region's Regional Cooperative Tourism Promotion (RCTP) contract. Delaying this decision will only cause further confusion and harm to our region's tourism partners. It is imperative that we move forward with clarity and purpose to ensure the continued success and stability of our region's tourism efforts.

Our current RDMO team, led by Clackamas County Tourism through Experience Mt. Hood and the Gorge, has a proven track record of success, stability, and collaboration. They have demonstrated their capability to manage this program effectively over the past two decades, and are fully equipped to continue this work, as highlighted during their recent RFP presentation.

The current RDMOs commitment to responsible visitor management, community engagement, and sustainable tourism practices aligns closely with Travel Oregon's 10-year vision and guiding values. They have shown their ability to convert challenges into meaningful opportunities, and the regional priorities reflect this dedication to continuous improvement and community benefit.

I acknowledge the good work done by the Columbia Gorge Tourism Alliance (CGTA), but believe that the current RDMOs approach, which focuses on the needs and interests of Oregon's communities, provides a stronger foundation for regional success. The CGTA's dual-state focus can lead to diluted efforts and potential conflicts, which I have already experienced firsthand. Experience Mt. Hood and the Gorge's commitment is solely to Oregon and its unique tourism landscape.

Prolonging the decision-making process will only cause uncertainty and hinder our region's ability to plan and implement effective strategies for the upcoming fiscal year. I urge the Travel Oregon Commissioners to make a decisive and timely choice, ensuring that the Mt. Hood and Columbia Gorge Region continues to thrive under experienced and dedicated leadership.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your decision and am ready to continue our work in promoting and enhancing the Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge Region's tourism potential.

Sincerely,

Lisa Farquharson
President / CEO

The Dalles Area Chamber of Commerce

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