

**From:** [Brandon Fahlman](#)  
**To:** [Finance](#)  
**Cc:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Subject:** Salem TPA Public Hearing  
**Date:** Wednesday, October 22, 2025 10:46:25 AM  
**Attachments:** [Salem TPA Public Hearing Letter.pdf](#)

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Please see attached. Please acknowledge receipt.

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Brandon Fahlman  
P (503) 930-2786  
E [bfahlman@gmail.com](mailto:bfahlman@gmail.com)

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**Brandon Fahlman**

295 Patterson St NW  
Salem, OR 97304  
(503) 930-2786  
bfahlman@gmail.com

22nd October 2025

**Salem City Council**

% Finance Department  
555 Liberty St SE, Room 230  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Councilors,

I, Brandon Fahlman, object to the continuation of the Salem Tourism Promotion Area.

Current Units Operated in Salem:

- (1) 1012 3rd St NW, Salem, OR 97304 (License 25 101068 00 MF)
- (2) 795 Church St SE, Salem, OR 97301 (License 25 100514 00 MF)
- (3) 1780 Winter St NE, Condo 101, Salem, OR 97301 (License 25 110781 00 MF)
- (4) 1780 Winter St NE, Condo 102, Salem, OR 97301 (License 25 110788 00 MF)
- (5) 1780 Winter St NE, Condo 103, Salem, OR 97301 (License 25 110792 00 MF)
- (6) 1780 Winter St NE, Condo 202, Salem, OR 97301 (License 25 110799 00 MF)

I cast my 6 votes in objection against the continuation of the Salem Tourism Promotion Area, evidenced by the above units.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:  
  
493611CA627D45C...

10/22/2025 | 10:43 AM PDT

**Brandon Fahlman**

**From:** [Eden Farias](#)  
**To:** [Güerita Farias](#); [Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Written Objection to TPA on Short-Term Rentals  
**Date:** Sunday, October 26, 2025 4:16:16 PM  
**Attachments:** [TPA Objection Eden.docx](#)  
[Ali's Opposition letter to TPA.docx](#)

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**Hello, please see attached letters for the upcoming hearing/consideration of TPA being applied to STRs.**

## Official Opposition: Maintaining the Distinction Between Residential STRs and Commercial Lodging

**Date:** October 26, 2025

**To:** Members of the City Council of Salem, Oregon

**Subject:** Opposition to TPA Fee: Preserving Residential Character and Fair Taxation of Short-Term Rentals

Dear City Council Members,

I am submitting this letter in opposition to the proposal to extend the Tourism Promotion Area (TPA) to short-term rental (STR) operators. While the goal of enhancing tourism is admirable, this measure fundamentally misunderstands the nature of residential STRs and sets a dangerous precedent by blurring the line between small, host-occupied properties and large, dedicated commercial hotels.

The TPA is designed to benefit and be funded by commercial lodging operations—entities whose sole purpose is large-scale, dedicated visitor accommodation. STRs, conversely, are typically integrated into residential neighborhoods and often involve hosts sharing their primary homes. Applying a targeted commercial promotion fee to these residential properties effectively reclassifies them as commercial businesses, which is inappropriate and contradicts the City's goal of preserving neighborhood integrity. This fee unfairly burdens property owners who use their homes occasionally for income, treating them identically to corporate hotel chains.

Adding the TPA fee on top of the existing Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) and standard income taxes creates an excessive tax burden that will disproportionately discourage occasional hosts—those who rent out a spare room or their entire house only a few weeks a year to supplement income. These casual hosts are vital as they offer unique, affordable lodging options and circulate revenue directly into the local community. The increased cost and administrative complexity associated with the TPA compliance may encourage these smaller, community-focused hosts to exit the market, leaving the sector dominated only by large, highly commercial investors.

The revenue generated by the TPA is intended to fund tourism initiatives, such as major conventions, brand advertising, and large-scale marketing efforts designed to attract high-volume commercial tourism. Guests who book STRs often do so for highly specific, individualized reasons (e.g., visiting family, work trip to the Capitol, or neighborhood immersion) and are not generally influenced by TPA-funded campaigns. Forcing these guests to pay a promotion fee for services they do not utilize and infrastructure they do not benefit from is inequitable taxation. We should maintain the principle that tax dollars should benefit the specific segment from which they are collected.

I urge the City Council to recognize the critical difference between residential short-term rentals and large commercial lodging establishments. Please reject the proposal to apply the TPA to STRs. Focus on strengthening the existing TOT mechanism, which is fair, simple, and already generates substantial revenue for core City services without jeopardizing the unique contribution STRs make to Salem's diverse housing and tourism landscape.

Thank you for your careful consideration of the long-term community impact of this policy.

Sincerely,

Ali Farias, STR Operator within city limits

## Written Objection to Applying Tourism Promotion Area (TPA) Fees to Short-Term Rentals in Salem, Oregon

**Date:** October 26, 2025

**To:** City of Salem, Oregon council members

**Subject:** Written Objection to the Inclusion of Short-Term Rental (STR) in the Tourism Promotion Area (TPA)

Dear Mayor and City Council Members,

I am writing to formally express my opposition to the proposed measure that would subject short-term rental operators and their guests to the Tourism Promotion Area (TPA). While I fully support the City's commitment to promoting tourism and economic growth, I believe this specific fee is ill-suited for the STR sector and represents an unfair, disproportionate burden that will negatively impact local hosts and visitors.

Short-term rentals in Salem are already highly regulated and contribute significantly to municipal revenue through the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT). The TOT is specifically designed to capture revenue from temporary lodging and fund city services related to tourism and cultural programs. Imposing an additional TPA fee—which is typically geared toward large hotels, convention centers, and major venues that directly benefit from mass marketing campaigns—places a disproportionate and stacked tax burden on small, often part-time, operators and their value-driven-based guests. The vast majority of STRs do not derive their bookings from the large-scale promotional efforts funded by the TPA; they rely on platform algorithms and word-of-mouth.

Requiring potentially hundreds of individual STR hosts to act as tax collectors for a separate TPA assessment introduces significant and unreasonable administrative complexity. Unlike large hotel chains with dedicated accounting departments and streamlined software, many STR operators are individual homeowners or families. They are already required to calculate, collect, and remit the TOT. Adding a second, separate fee for promotion purposes creates a compliance hurdle that increases the risk of error, necessitates additional auditing resources from the City, and essentially penalizes small businesses with regulatory complexity.

The imposition of an additional fee is passed directly to the consumer, making the total cost of staying in a Salem STR higher. This increased cost reduces Salem's competitiveness in the regional tourism market, particularly against cities that rely solely on the TOT for lodging revenue. When travelers seek accommodation, they compare the final, all-inclusive price. Adding the TPA fee makes Salem less attractive, potentially driving tourists to neighboring areas, such as Keizer and unincorporated Marion County, and ultimately undercuts the very economic vitality the TPA is intended to foster.

I respectfully urge the City Council to exempt short-term rentals from the proposed TPA. STRs contribute vital tax revenue and diversify the city's lodging options, but they do not fit the financial or operational model that TPAs were created to support. Instead of adding a new tax layer, the City should focus on ensuring robust collection and effective utilization of the existing Transient Occupancy Tax.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Eden Farias, STR Operator within city limits

**From:** [Leigha Gaynair](#)  
**To:** [Finance](#)  
**Cc:** [CityRecorder](#); [paultigan@gmail.com](mailto:paultigan@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Formal Written Objection TPA\_For hearing November 24, 2025  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 12, 2025 10:18:50 AM  
**Attachments:** [WrittenObjection\\_Hearing\\_STPA\\_Submitted\\_11.12.25.docx](#)

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## **Subject: Written Objection to STPA Continuation - Public Hearing November 24, 2025**

Dear Salem City Finance Department,

I am writing to formally submit my written objection to the continuation of the Salem Tourism Promotion Area (STPA) as it applies to Short-Term Rental (STR) and Accessory Short-Term Rental (ASTR) operators under Ordinance 4-25, as outlined in the public hearing notice.

### **Public Hearing Details:**

- Date: November 24, 2025
- Subject: STPA Continuation and STR/ASTR Registration under Ordinance 4-25

### **My Information:**

- Name: Leigh Gaynair
- Property Address: 1915 Maple Ave NE, Salem, OR 97301
- ASTR License Number: 26101074
- Property Type: Accessory Short-Term Rental (Primary Residence)

### **Objection Summary:**

As a Salem homeowner and property taxpayer operating an ASTR from my own primary residence, I strongly object to the STPA continuation for the following reasons:

1. **Discriminatory taxation** - STR/ASTR operators are the only home-based businesses subjected to commercial industry taxation
2. **We are homeowners, not hotels** - I already pay \$186 annual licensing fees plus full residential property taxes
3. **Excessive cumulative burden** - 12.5% total lodging taxes plus licensing fees, insurance, and property taxes
4. **Taxation without representation** - STPA is controlled by hoteliers with no STR/ASTR representation
5. **No demonstrated benefit** - STPA marketing serves hotels, not residential home rentals
6. **Platform tax collection** - Airbnb/VRBO already collect and remit TOT efficiently
7. **Retroactive policy reversal** - 2019 STPA explicitly exempted STRs/ASTRs
8. **Competitive disadvantage** - Salem's 11% local lodging tax drives guests to neighboring jurisdictions

### **Requested Action:**

I respectfully request that the City Council:

- Reject the STPA continuation as it applies to STR and ASTR operators
- Restore the original 2019 exemption for home-based rentals
- Recognize that homeowners should not be treated as commercial hotels

**Attached Documents:**

Please find attached my complete formal written objection with detailed arguments and supporting information. I request that this objection be entered into the official record of the November 24, 2025 public hearing and distributed to all City Council members for their consideration.

Please confirm receipt of this objection and provide any additional information regarding:

- The public hearing format and procedures
- How to register for remote testimony if applicable
- Timeline for City Council consideration and decision

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I appreciate the opportunity to provide input on this important policy decision affecting Salem homeowners and small business operators.

Respectfully,

Leigh Gaynair

**Attachment:** Formal Written Objection to STPA Continuation (full document)

# **WRITTEN OBJECTION TO CONTINUATION OF SALEM TOURISM PROMOTION AREA (STPA)**

**Re: Public Hearing on November 24, 2025 - Ordinance 4-25 and STPA Continuation**

To: Salem City Council

Date: November 12, 2025

From: Leigh Gaynair, Registered ASTR Operator

Property Address: 1915 Maple Ave, NE Salem, OR 97301

ASTR License Number: 26101074

## **FORMAL OBJECTION TO STPA CONTINUATION**

I am writing as a registered operator of an Accessory Short-Term Rental (ASTR) in Salem, Oregon—my own primary residence—to formally object to the continuation of the Salem Tourism Promotion Area (STPA) and the implementation of Ordinance 4-25, which designates STR and ASTR operators as responsible parties under the STPA assessment.

### **BACKGROUND CONCERNS:**

When the STPA was originally approved by City Council in December 2019, short-term rentals were explicitly excluded from the 2% assessment. The STPA established an additional 2% fee on top of the 9% Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) as defined in SRC Chapter 37. Ordinance 4-25 now reverses this exclusion, requiring STR and ASTR operators to collect and remit STPA fees beginning in 2026. This represents discriminatory taxation of home-based businesses and a fundamental change to the economic framework under which many of us made the decision to enter the legal short-term rental market.

### **GROUND'S FOR OBJECTION:**

#### **1. DISCRIMINATORY TAXATION OF HOME-BASED "SHARING ECONOMY" BUSINESSES**

STRs and ASTRs are **home-based businesses**, yet we are the **only** home-based or "sharing economy" businesses being subjected to this commercial lodging tax. The City does not impose similar taxation on other home-based businesses operating in Salem, including:

- **Home bakeries** - Not subject to restaurant taxes or special food service assessments
- **Home-based childcare** - Not subject to commercial daycare facility taxes
- **Home-based resale clothing/goods businesses** - Not subject to retail business assessments
- **Home offices** for consultants, freelancers, contractors - Not subject to commercial office taxes
- **Other sharing economy businesses** - Not subject to industry-specific assessments

## **Why are STR/ASTR operators being singled out for taxation that mirrors commercial hotel/motel operations when we are residential property owners operating small home-based businesses?**

This constitutes **selective and discriminatory taxation** that unfairly targets one specific category of home-based business while exempting all others.

## **2. WE ARE NOT HOTELS - WE ARE HOMEOWNERS**

There is a fundamental difference between:

### **Hotels/Motels:**

- Commercial properties zoned for lodging business
- Corporate or business entities
- Properties that exist solely to generate lodging revenue
- Businesses with employees, commercial insurance, and business infrastructure
- Properties exempt from residential property taxation

### **STR/ASTR Operators:**

- **Residential properties** - our homes
- Individual homeowners or residents
- **I am renting space in my own primary residence (ASTR)**
- Properties that serve as our primary residences
- **We pay full residential property taxes** on these properties
- Small-scale operations, typically sharing our own homes or managing 1-2 properties
- No employees or commercial business structure
- Sharing our homes to supplement income, pay mortgages, cover property taxes

**We already pay property taxes** as homeowners. We should not be treated as large commercial lodging businesses simply because we occasionally rent out rooms in our own homes or share our properties.

## **3. DOUBLE TAXATION: PROPERTY TAX + COMMERCIAL LODGING ASSESSMENTS**

Unlike hotels, which are commercial properties, STR/ASTR operators face **double taxation**:

- **Property taxes** on our residential properties (assessed and paid annually like any other Salem homeowner)
- **TOT (9%)** on rental income
- **State Transient Lodging Tax (1.5%)** on rental income
- **Now STPA (2%)** - an additional commercial lodging assessment

Hotels are commercial properties with commercial tax treatment. We are **residential property owners already contributing to Salem's tax base through property taxes**. Adding commercial lodging assessments creates an unfair double burden that doesn't exist for other home-based businesses.

#### **4. EXCESSIVE CUMULATIVE TAX AND REGULATORY BURDEN ON HOME-BASED BUSINESS**

STR and ASTR operators will now face a **total lodging tax rate of 12.5%**:

- **9% Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT)** per SRC Chapter 37
- **2% STPA fee** (under Ordinance 4-25)
- **1.5% State Transient Lodging Tax**

**Plus significant ongoing costs:**

- **\$186 annual ASTR license renewal fee** (for primary residence)
- **Stand-alone STR properties pay even higher licensing and renewal fees**
- **Mandatory liability insurance premiums**
- **Property taxes on our homes**

**No other home-based business in Salem faces this level of taxation and regulatory burden.** A home baker doesn't pay \$186+ annual fees plus restaurant taxes. A home daycare doesn't pay commercial childcare facility assessments on top of hundreds of dollars in licensing fees. A home-based resale business doesn't pay retail business taxes plus nearly \$200 in annual fees.

The 2% STPA represents a **22% increase** in local tax burden (on top of existing 9% TOT), making Salem one of the most expensive jurisdictions in Oregon for home-based short-term rentals.

#### **5. PLATFORMS ALREADY COLLECT AND REMIT ON OUR BEHALF**

Host sites like **Airbnb, VRBO, and other booking platforms already collect and remit TOT and other taxes directly to the City of Salem on behalf of operators** as part of their service fees. This means:

- The City receives tax revenue automatically without operator involvement
- Collection and compliance are already streamlined and efficient
- Adding STPA creates **redundant administrative burden** for both operators and the City
- The current system already works effectively for tax collection

Forcing individual home-based operators to separately track, collect, and remit an additional 2% STPA fee:

- **Creates unnecessary administrative complexity**

- Duplicates systems already functioning through platforms
- Disproportionately burdens operators who don't use platform services
- Increases compliance costs and risk for small home-based businesses
- Is especially burdensome for ASTR operators who are simply sharing rooms in their own primary residences

## 6. TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION

The STPA was created by and for the **commercial hotel/motel industry** through the Salem Area Lodging Association (SALA). Critical concerns:

- **No STR/ASTR input in STPA design** - Home-based operators were excluded from planning
- **No representation in fund governance** - STPA revenues are controlled by hoteliers
- **Fundamentally different businesses** - We are homeowners, not commercial lodging facilities
- **Direct conflict of interest** - Hotels compete with us for guests, yet control our mandatory contributions

We are being forced to fund a marketing organization controlled by **commercial competitors** with no voice in how those funds benefit home-based rentals.

**As an ASTR operator sharing space in my own primary residence, I have nothing in common with a commercial hotel operation. Yet I'm being taxed as if I do.**

## 7. NO DEMONSTRATED BENEFIT TO HOME-BASED RENTALS

Travel Salem's STPA-funded marketing primarily promotes:

- Hotel room nights and downtown hotel district
- Convention and group bookings at commercial facilities
- Business traveler accommodations
- Large event lodging at hotels

**There is zero evidence this marketing benefits residential home rentals**, which serve different guests:

- Families seeking home environments
- Extended stays requiring kitchens
- Pet owners unable to book hotels
- Groups needing multiple bedrooms
- Budget-conscious travelers
- Overflow for family visits
- Travelers seeking authentic local experiences in residential neighborhoods

We are being taxed to fund marketing that **exclusively benefits our commercial competitors** with no accountability, no measurable ROI for residential rentals, and no operator representation in governance decisions.

## **8. NO ADMINISTRATIVE FEE FOR COLLECTION**

Per SRC Chapter 37, operators collecting TOT retain a 5% administrative fee. **No such fee applies to STPA collections.**

This means home-based operators must:

- Track STPA separately from TOT
- Create additional accounting systems
- Remit 100% of STPA with no compensation for burden
- Bear all costs without professional accounting departments

This is particularly unfair for **individual homeowners managing our own homes** without business infrastructure. I am sharing space in my own primary residence—I am not a business with accounting staff. Additionally, the City reporting system does not support this reporting and submission. There is one (1) staff member supporting the entirety of the TOT finance reporting system.

## **9. POLICY REVERSAL PENALIZES COMPLIANT HOMEOWNERS AND CREATES COMPETITIVE DISADVANTAGE**

Many of us made significant investment decisions based on the **2019 policy that explicitly exempted STRs/ASTRs from STPA**, including property purchases, substantial home improvements to meet safety requirements, **\$186+ annual licensing and compliance investments**, and business planning around 9% TOT rate.

Ordinance 4-25 **retroactively changes the rules**, potentially making previously viable home rental operations unsustainable. This penalizes homeowners who complied in good faith with Salem's regulations and paid substantial licensing fees to operate legally.

**Additionally, Salem's combined 11% local lodging tax (9% TOT + 2% STPA) creates significant competitive disadvantage:**

- **Drives guests to neighboring jurisdictions** - Keizer, unincorporated areas with substantially lower taxes
- **Reduces platform competitiveness** - Guests compare total prices on Airbnb/VRBO; Salem listings appear significantly more expensive
- **Harms Salem homeowners** while directly benefiting properties just outside city limits
- **Incentivizes illegal operation** - Higher tax burden increases motivation for non-compliance, reducing total tax revenue
- **Makes sharing our primary residences financially unviable** for many ASTR operators

This policy harms compliant Salem homeowners who have invested substantially in proper licensing and benefits properties in surrounding areas, ultimately reducing Salem's competitiveness and potentially decreasing overall tax revenue through reduced bookings and increased non-compliance.

### **ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS:**

If the City Council is determined to continue the STPA despite these objections, I propose:

#### **Option 1: Maintain Original STR/ASTR Exemption (STRONGLY PREFERRED)**

- Reverse Ordinance 4-25 and restore 2019 exemption
- Recognize STRs/ASTRs as home-based businesses, not commercial hotels
- Treat us like other home-based businesses that are not subject to industry-specific commercial taxes

#### **Option 2: Exempt All Home-Based Businesses or Tax None**

- Apply consistent policy: either all home businesses pay industry taxes, or none do
- End discriminatory treatment of STR/ASTR home-based operators

#### **Option 3: Reduced Rate Reflecting Home-Based Status**

- 2% for commercial hotels
- Yearly fee and not a percentage for home-based STR/ASTR operators to be added to the renewal
- Reflects residential property status and lack of commercial infrastructure

#### **Option 4: Voluntary Opt-In Program**

- Make STPA voluntary for home-based STR/ASTR operators
- Allow homeowners to choose whether marketing benefits justify 2% fee

#### **ADD: Mandatory Representation for Home-Based Operators**

- Require STR/ASTR seats on STPA governance board
- Allocate funds proportional to contributions for residential rental marketing
- Ensure home-based operators have voice in fund allocation

### **REQUESTED RELIEF:**

I respectfully request that the Salem City Council:

1. **Reject continuation of the STPA** as it applies to STR and ASTR operators under Ordinance 4-25

2. **Restore the original 2019 exemption** recognizing STRs/ASTRs as home-based businesses distinct from commercial hotels
3. **Conduct equal treatment analysis** comparing tax treatment of STR/ASTR to other home-based businesses
4. **Recognize the discriminatory nature** of singling out one type of home-based sharing economy business for commercial industry taxation
5. **Acknowledge that we are homeowners and property taxpayers**, not commercial lodging corporations, and that ASTR operators are sharing space in our own primary residences
6. **Consider the cumulative burden** of \$186+ annual licensing fees plus 12.5% lodging taxes plus property taxes
7. **Enter this objection into the official record** of the November 24, 2025 public hearing

## **CONCLUSION:**

I am a **homeowner and Salem property taxpayer** sharing space in **my own primary residence** (ASTR). I am not a commercial hotel. I already pay:

- **\$186 annual licensing renewal fee**
- **Full residential property taxes**
- **12.5% in lodging taxes** (if STPA continues)
- **Mandatory insurance and compliance costs**

**The STPA singles out STR/ASTR home-based operators for discriminatory taxation that:**

- No other home-based business in Salem faces
- Treats residential property owners like commercial hotel corporations
- Treats homeowners sharing their own primary residences like commercial lodging facilities
- Imposes double taxation (property tax + commercial assessments)
- Provides zero demonstrated benefit to home-based rentals
- Funds marketing controlled by our commercial competitors
- Offers no representation or accountability
- Penalizes compliant homeowners who have paid substantial licensing fees
- Creates unsustainable competitive disadvantage and financial burden

**I am not a hotel. I am a homeowner sharing space in my own primary residence. I should not be treated as a commercial lodging corporation.**

The STPA was designed by hotels, for hotels. Forcing home-based operators—especially those of us sharing our own primary residences—to fund it through Ordinance 4-25 is fundamentally unfair, discriminatory, and will harm individual Salem homeowners and residents, make home-sharing financially unviable for many, reduce compliance, disadvantage Salem properties against neighboring jurisdictions, and undermine the benefits of the sharing economy for Salem residents.

**I strongly object to the STPA continuation as it applies to home-based Short-Term Rental and Accessory Short-Term Rental operators.**

Thank you for considering this objection from a Salem homeowner, property taxpayer, and primary residence ASTR operator.

Respectfully submitted,

Leigh Gaynair  
(541) 948-9312  
Leigaynair@gmail.com

CC: Salem City Manager  
Salem Finance Department  
Salem Planning Department

**From:** [Emily Drew](#)  
**To:** [Finance](#)  
**Cc:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]Objection to the continuation of the TPA and ASTR inclusion  
**Date:** Monday, November 17, 2025 9:50:10 AM

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Dear City of Salem,

I am writing to express my objection to the continuation of TPA in Salem, as an operator of a ASTR.

Ordinance 4-25, which will make ASTR's subject to the TPA presents a hardship on my very small business of renting out a room in my home through short term stays. 95% of the guests who stay in my home are not in Salem for Salem ... they are not partaking in ANY type of tourism. They are here as a stop on their larger trip, or to visit family or spare themselves a commute for work. My ASTR is a practical place to sleep overnight, not a space for people coming to Salem to enjoy what the city has to offer.

I object to ASTR's being included in this ordinance.  
Emily Drew