

Viewpoints on the Renewal of the 2% Albany County Lodging Tax

Ballot Language: “Shall the Board of Commissioners of the County of Albany, State of Wyoming, be authorized to continue to impose, as allowed by Wyoming Statute, a two percent (2%) excise tax upon the sales price paid for lodging services within Albany County, the primary purpose of which is for local travel and tourism promotion for the period of January 1, 2027, through December 31, 2030?”

FOR THE LODGING TAX RENEWAL

✓ This is not a new lodging tax. Albany County residents have voted to renew the county lodging tax option since its inception in 1989. In 2020, state legislation established a 5% statewide lodging tax. The state's collection is distributed as a 60/40 split between the Wyoming Office of Tourism and the Albany County Tourism Board. Following this legislation, the county lodging tax renewal was set at 2% to keep the county's total collection at its historic 4%.

✓ All 23 counties in Wyoming collect it. The tax applies only to paid overnight stays (hotels, motels, B&Bs, short-term rental services like Airbnb/VRBO, and campgrounds) and outdoor guide outfitters. Albany County residents do not pay this tax unless they stay in county lodging facilities or hire an outdoor guide.

✓ In 2025, direct travel spending in Albany County reached over \$211 million annually. This spending generated \$13 million in total sales tax revenue, with \$5.2 million staying local to Albany County. This spending supported 1,700 jobs. The Tax supports staffing the Laramie Area Visitor Center and Centennial Visitor Center, as well as marketing local events, businesses, attractions, and responsible recreation initiatives to enhance the experience of visiting Albany County.

✓ Visitors account for 18% of all sales taxes collected by the City of Laramie and Albany County, helping support infrastructure and public services used by visitors and residents alike. The Lodging Tax proceeds are used to attract these visitors. This amounts to \$759 in taxes offset for each household in Albany County. The Lodging Tax funds community grant and sponsorship programs supporting local events, youth sports tournaments, and conferences, bringing in outside visitation during slow seasons to boost local business revenue. Grants and sponsorships awarded totaled \$438,500 over the last four fiscal years (2022 to 2026).

AGAINST THE LODGING TAX RENEWAL

✓ It's irritating when travelling to have to pay around 12% extra in taxes for a hotel room in Denver, let alone the 22% they charge in Portland, 15% or more charged in San Francisco and New York City which may go to support things that are only a little related to tourism. Charging a lodging tax may discourage visitors from staying in motels.

✓ Laramie has enough people without encouraging more tourists to come, creating congestion.

✓ Gouging tourists is not an ethical way to support local services; if additional services are needed to accommodate the tourists who come, we should figure out other ways to pay for them.

✓ Just because other places do it doesn't mean we should too.

✓ This is a way for the state to avoid dealing with the issue of outmoded reliance on the mineral industry for revenue. If the Wyoming Legislature would revamp its revenue structure, an extra tax like this would not be necessary and the state could afford to pass through to counties and/or cities the money they need for tourism services.

If a majority of the votes cast is FOR the measure, it passes. If a majority of the votes cast is AGAINST the measure, it fails.

The League is a nonpartisan organization that does not support candidates or political parties but may take a stand on issues members have reached consensus upon. The League does not have a position on this ballot issue, though the group supports maintaining city and county revenues as necessary to adequately provide city and county services for the people.



Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

wyominglwv.org laramie@wyominglwv.org