

*The other side of the story...*

# The Price is Our Way of Life

The Lodging tax 'yes' crew has been working hard to sell us on their 2% tax to bring more tourists.

But we all see that our hotels and tourist businesses are expanding too fast already. Town now wants paid parking because of overcrowding. We need less promotion, not more.

Let's look at some of the vote-yes claims:

CLAIM: It's the tax you don't pay.

**FACT:** We pay a very high price! It costs us our way of life. You pay each time you sit in a summertime traffic jam or see a dead moose by the side of the road.

CLAIM: We need that 40% of the lodging tax that mitigates the tourist impact.

**FACT:** Nonsense. The biggest chunk of that 40% funds all the empty buses that endlessly drive around town. Tourists rarely take the bus; they drive cars. The real tourist impact is overcrowding, and the 40% does nothing to solve overcrowding.

CLAIM: Other tourist destinations do it. Most charge even more.

**FACT:** Remember your mother's answer to this lame argument? "If all the other kids are jumping off a bridge are you going to jump too?"

Who cares what they do in Des Moines or Aspen. We don't want to be like either of those places. In fact, Jackson Hole is popular exactly BECAUSE we are not like those other places.

CLAIM: The lodging tax just promotes the off-season.

**FACT:** A lot of it goes to subsidize airfare for people who fly here. Tourists fly in, rent cars, and clog our roadways.

CLAIM: We really need the 40%! The 'yes' crowd hyperventilates on this one.

**FACT:** It's a smokescreen. They distract you with the 40% focus so you won't notice the 60%. The 60% is over-promoting Jackson Hole. This is the magician's trick. Focus all the attention on the 40% and never discuss the bigger 60% chunk.

CLAIM: In two years, 2016-17, \$426,500 was allocated to Fire/EMS from Lodging Tax funds. The Lodging Tax funds emergency services.

**FACT:** Money is money; those lodging tax dollars look just like all the other taxes collected. This claim is pure manipulation.

Every government's first priority is the safety of its citizens. Essential services come first! Police and fire departments come first! We all know this — it's Government 101.

CLAIM: Lodging Tax helps pay for START, Parks & Rec, and the Chamber of Commerce.

**FACT:** Is that supposed to be a threat? Voters already said NO to START funding. Businesses should pay for the Chamber, not the voters.

CLAIM: We will work on changing the 60/40 percentage so we can spend more on mitigation.

**FACT:** Not likely. It took a lot of effort to get a 40% carve out solely for Teton County. Changing Wyoming state statute to get still more will likely not happen anytime soon. Change the statute first and then we can revisit the lodging tax.

**Bottom line:** You should not be swayed by the flimsy arguments you're hearing about the lodging tax benefits. It might have made sense during the great recession years from 2008 to 2010, but it makes no sense today.

---

*The tax we don't pay  
is the tax we don't need*

---