



February 4, 2012

House Transportation and Economic Development Committee  
Re: Support for HB 4020 and 4028

Co-Chairs and Members of the Committee:

110 RAILROAD AVENUE  
HOOD RIVER, OR 97031  
(541) 386-3556

Good Afternoon. My name is Jim Guthrie. I am the Operations Manager for the Mt Hood Railroad. I have worked for the railroad for the past 24 years. I would like to Thank You for allowing to be here today to discuss the ConnectOregon funding. We are a short line railroad located in the Hood River Valley which runs 21 miles from downtown Hood River along the Columbia River to the historic town of Parkdale which is located at the base of Mt Hood. We offer scenic train excursions as well as provide freight services to local lumber, fruit and propane companies. Mt Hood Railroad was originally constructed in 1906 and was built to service the timber and logging industry. In 1988 we reestablished our passenger service line and in 2011 we transported approximately 60,000 passengers and 500 freight cars.

As many of you know, a majority of short line railroad's in our state are in a deferred state of maintenance with few public sources for funding. That is why the ConnectOregon program has become so vital for us to obtain funding to better serve our rural community.

We received funding from C/O II in 2007 after a major flood event. Had it not been for the funding, Mt Hood Railroad may have been in abandonment status. The funding was instrumental in keeping our line open for service. We received numerous support letters from various stakeholders including city, county, state and port authority entities as well as from our tourism trade and all the shippers we serve. The substantial funding through the program allowed us to continue serving our community.

Mt Hood Railroad continues to be a major tourist attraction and a leisure magnet to the Hood River Valley. We are continuing to play a large role and vital link to our freight customers. Our freight business is likely to continue to grow as truck fuel costs continue to escalate. Rail commercials on television depict how efficient and competitive moving products by rail can be for smaller independent companies.

For us to be able to meet these essential goals it is IMPERATIVE that we are able to upgrade our bridges to meet 286K standards that would allow us full participation in the nation's rail freight system. Having modern, well designed bridge structures would allow our bridges to handle the increased freight traffic and help protect our railroad from future damages.

Please consider my support in passing HB 4020 & 4028. Thank you for your time.

Jim Guthrie – Mt Hood Railroad, Hood River, Oregon