

Testimony Supporting SB 534

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Chair of Wilsonville Chamber's Business Cluster Development Program; and Secretary of Board, ORAVI, Oregon Aviation Industries.

Chair Beyer and Committee:

Contrary to testimony from the City of Wilsonville, claiming this bill is unnecessary, SB 534 is in fact very important to the future of aviation in Oregon. The reason is that predominantly airports, by their very nature are generally located outside of urban growth boundaries. The reality is airports are generally more compatible with agricultural uses than with urban residential uses.

Airports require very large land area, plus vertical control, glide paths and landing zones, which tends to make them not as desirable for urban locations. But at the same time airports, like Aurora, and many others around the state, are essential support facilities for urban businesses. Many urban based corporations rely upon non-commercial flights to conveniently and efficiently move executives around the country.

Airports like Aurora also provide an excellent operating base for aviation related businesses, such as refueling, materials transport, avionics, and maintenance functions. They also provide essential emergency service functions, such as medical air evacuation, wild fire base camps, and serve agricultural operations. For example, there are more than 50 businesses operating at Aurora Airport, employing more than 1,200 people, with average wages of \$66,000. Statewide there are over 350 aviation related businesses, all relying upon properly maintained and operated airports.

The reality is that aviation serves a critical and essential role in Oregon's economy, and in fact is a key economic engine. Yet, airports and aviation in general, have been all but ignored in providing appropriate funding and needed infrastructure to keep the industry strong and airports safely operated and properly maintained.

The City of Wilsonville is correct that Oregon land use laws, (Goal 14 (UGBs) and Infrastructure (Goal 11 & 12) in particular, are ego-centrally focused around cities as the primary service providers. This structure works well for typical urban development including residential, commercial and most industrial activities. The City is also correct that there are current provisions to allow extension of urban services outside of UGB's, but only by agreement requiring ultimate annexation.

However, this city-centric focus fails to recognize the unique character of airports and their best fit in rural areas. But more importantly, it ignores the reality that cities typically are not supportive of airports, primarily because of citizen complaints of noise, fly-overs, etc. Consequently provision of needed infrastructure consistently fails to be addressed.

The City's arguments make sense for the City, but their narrow focus fails to address the broader statewide issue that airports are in reality unique "urban facilities", that are by nature, typically located in rural areas, thereby severely limiting their access to needed urban services. The City argues about unintended consequences, and that is a reality of their opposition. They are actually unintentionally arguing against the best interests of many of the businesses that are based in Wilsonville, who rely upon aviation services, not adequately provided by commercial airports, like PIA. In their own self-interest,

controlling the services they provide, and forcing annexation, they are in fact arguing against the equally valid needs of the aviation industry and airports in particular.

Oregon's land use system of dividing urban and rural areas has failed to appropriately identify the unique role and character of airports. They are in fact more urban than rural in character and need for urban services, than typical rural industrial uses. Yet, they don't easily fit into the urban environment. Therefore special legislation is necessary to fill this gap.

I would also argue that SB 534 is one of several bills that are needed to properly position Oregon's airports to serve their valuable economic functions. This bill is appropriate as a follow-up to SB 680, which was adopted several years ago, but has had very little, if any, implementation.

SB 680 declared the State's intent to promote airport development by establishing 3 Model Airports, specifically including Aurora. The Bill also was designed to identify and resolve rules and regulations that unnecessarily interfere with the proper operations, development, and maintenance of airports.

Unfortunately, there was, and has not been since, any funding allocated to implementing SB 680. But ORAVI and the Aurora Airport Owners Association have identified infrastructure (specifically water and sanitary sewer) as critical service necessary to promote airport operations and business development.

The current regulation, controlled by cities and annexation, fails to properly serve airports, and typically forces them into an un-winnable political environment of seeking unsupported annexation, just to get services. Consequently, airports across the state continued to be under-served and under-developed.

I would summarize by suggesting that failure to allow urban services (without unnecessary annexation) to serve airports is equivalent to asking a pilot to take off, without a full tank of fuel. It also fails to properly position airports and severely limits their associated business development to generate the economic power they are capable of providing to the state.

Respectfully submitted;

Ben Altman