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February 16, 2015

Senate Committee On Business and Transportation
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Please Vote "NO" SB 534

Dear Chair Beyer and Committee Members:

Our organization and its individual members oppose SB 534;
Relating to a provision for city services to an airport.

Friends of Marion County is a 501(c)3 farmland protection organization founded in 1998. Our mission is to protect farm and forestland, parks, and open space.

I have served on the Marion County Planning Commission for two terms. In 2010/2011 as President of Friends of Marion County I was selected to serve on the Public Advisory Committee (PAC) comprised of airport users, representative of local municipalities and concerned citizens reviewing the 10-Year Aurora Master Plan.

The Aurora Master Plan contains seven chapters:

Chapter 1 - Introduction
Chapter 2 - Airport inventory
Chapter 3 - Aeronautical Activity Forecast
Chapter 4 - Facilities Requirements
Chapter 5 - Airport Alternatives
Chapter 6 - Airport Layout Plan
Chapter 7 - Capital Improvement Plan

This document was to be reviewed by the FAA Seattle Regional Office. However the FAA Seattle Regional Office is not familiar with Oregon's long history of farmland protections. Of course, our primary objective is to protect farmland in Marion County. The Aurora Airport affects both Marion and Clackamas Counties since it lies near the border of the two jurisdictions and the City of Wilsonville which is impacted by small aircraft traffic. As a matter of fact, during one of the many meetings there was a crash incident of a small aircraft into a private residence. The home owner appeared at the next PAC meeting to express concerns about expansion of aircraft activity in the area.

Our view from the outset was that the 10-Year Aurora Airport Masterplan would impact both farmland and regional transportation routes surrounding the airport. In particular, high-value Class I soil farmland at the southern perimeter of the proposed runway expansion is impacted. In addition, safety concerns would require the closure and relocation of Keil Road, a Marion County road heavily used as an agricultural transportation route.

SB 534 proposes that Aurora Airport be permitted to establish an agreement between the airport and the City of Aurora to connect to the city for the purpose of supplying drinking water. I do recall that there is some data collected that show very low levels of Arsenic in wells on Aurora Airport property. The results I've seen are quite variable and depend on the well sampled and time of year. There are also other private wells that supply drinking water to the numerous private property owners at the industrial airpark area. There appears to be a sufficient supply of acceptable drinking water available. Of course, there are ways to treat for Arsenic and other contaminants in drinking water. These methods are readily available and should be adopted by the airport users if they have current or future concerns about drinkability.

Passage of SB 534 is not the answer for the airport users. There are other impacts that arise from a proposed airport expansion. It is now time to realize that the Aurora Airport is constrained and that further land acquisition is not feasible and that extension of services beyond the UGB is a bad idea.

Again, we want to emphasize our opposition to SB 534 and request a "NO" vote of the committee on this bill.

Thanks for listening.

Roger Kaye, President
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