



March 27, 2015

Joint Committee on Ways and Means
Sub-committee on Transportation and Economic Development
900 Court St NE, Salem, OR 97301

Re: Request for State funding for the Amtrak Cascades Service

Co-Chairs Johnson and Gomberg and Joint Committee Members:

In 2011, I attended a Travel Oregon workshop on the economic impact of cycle-tourism in Oregon. At that time, it was reported that cyclists were spending \$400 million per year in Oregon. When the moderator asked how Clackamas County could capitalize on this important economic trend, the need for quality bicycle shops in south Clackamas County was identified. Eighteen months later, First City Cycles, a 4100 square foot Specialized dealership was opened on Main Street in downtown Oregon City.

Since opening the bike shop, I have been working with the City of Oregon City to open a bicycle-themed marketplace & bistro at the Oregon City Amtrak train depot. After nearly two years of planning, this tourism-oriented project is now in the funding stage and ready to launch. We are looking forward to a grand opening celebration in June 2015.

Needless to say, I was shocked to hear that Oregon legislators were thinking about pulling funding for the Amtrak Cascades line. As you know, doing so would end passenger rail service at the Oregon City and would totally derail the marketplace & bistro project.

The marketplace & bistro promises to provide at least 5 jobs, while First City Cycles expects to add 2 additional jobs. Also, based on reports from other reactivated train stations around the country, once our doors open to the public, ridership at the Oregon City station will increase significantly. As of 2012, Amtrak data indicates 30 passengers per day board at Oregon City. We expect this figure to triple over the next 2 years.

If the Ways and Means Committee fails to fund Amtrak Cascades service to Oregon City, First City Central Marketplace & Bistro will not come to fruition. Also, because continued passenger service to Oregon City figures heavily into our plans for attracting cycle-tourists (and their dollars) to Clackamas County, shutting down the Cascades line would seriously damage these efforts.

I realize Amtrak is heavily subsidized, but so are most other forms of public transportation. As with other forms of public transportation, Amtrak provides valuable economic and environmental benefits to Oregonians. For these reason, I believe the Cascades line deserves to receive continued funding in 2015 and beyond.

Please don't allow our projects, and the benefits they bring to our community, fail. I urge you to continue investing in the Amtrak Cascades line. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Blane Meier, MBA

Owner, First City Central Marketplace & Bistro, LLC
Owner, First City Cycles, LLC
Owner, Meier Wealth Management, Inc.
Chair, Clackamas County Pedestrian / Bikeway Advisory Committee
Board Member, Oregon City Trail Alliance
Member, Oregon City Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee
Former Chair, Oregon City Transportation Advisory Committee
Former Member, Oregon Passenger Rail Advisory Committee



916 Main Street, Oregon City
Store: (503) 344-4901
www.firstcitycycles.com

Blane Meier

blane@fccycles.net
Cell: (503) 421-4506