



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:

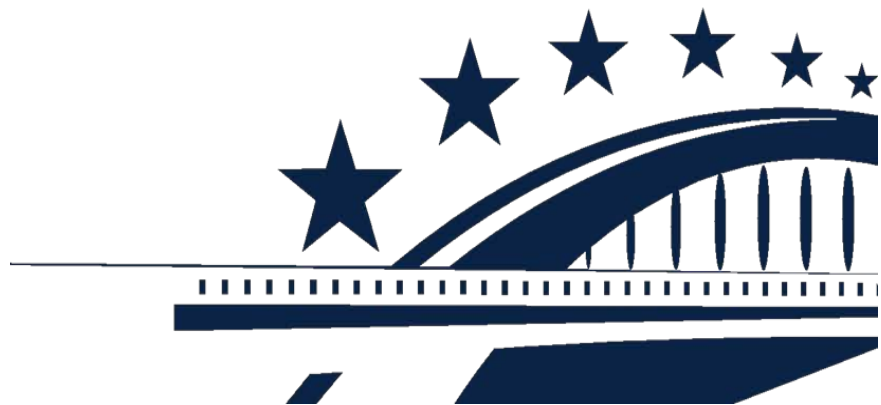
The Oregon City Business Alliance represents the interests of Oregon City's business community. Our mission is to encourage, promote and support positive economic growth in Oregon City.

Recently, our board of directors learned of the possible closing of Amtrak's Cascades line from Eugene to Portland due to a funding shortfall. On behalf of our business community, we strongly urge you and your committee members to keep the Amtrak Cascades line on track.

Here are a few reasons why we believe funding makes good business sense:

- Willamette Falls, the second largest waterfall by volume in North America, is located in Oregon City. Over the next few years, the Riverwalk and Legacy Project will attract hundreds of thousands of tourists to Oregon City each year to view this amazing natural wonder. We expect many of these tourists to find their way to our city by way of the Amtrak Cascades line.
- Even though Oregon City's train depot is currently inactive, daily passenger counts have continued to rise year after year. Of the top 20 cities in Oregon City by population, Oregon City is slightly behind Beaverton. As Oregon City continues to grow, more citizens will inevitably choose to commute on the Amtrak Cascades line.

Oregon City Business Alliance  
P.O. Box 1593, Oregon City 97045  
Phone (503) 479-0080 / Fax (503) 479-0081  
[www.ocbusinessalliance.com](http://www.ocbusinessalliance.com)



- Over the past 2 years, a local Oregon City bike shop owner has been working to open a bicycle-themed marketplace and bistro at the Oregon City Amtrak train depot. This tourism-oriented business will provide amenities to current Amtrak passengers as well as tourists and cycling enthusiasts from around the northwest and beyond. A volunteer passenger assistance program will also be established. First City Central Marketplace & Bistro is scheduled to open June 2015 and will provide 7 new jobs and a needed boost to tourism and the Oregon City economy. Without the Cascades line in operation, this project will be dead on arrival.

We understand that Amtrak service is heavily subsidized, but isn't this also true for our roadways and bus services? At a Tri-Met presentation last year, we learned that only 25% of Tri-Mets costs are covered by user fees. Nonetheless, taxpayers, and the legislators that represent them, continue to fund roads, buses, and light rail because they recognize the public good these provide and the economic benefits they bring to local communities in Oregon.

For these reasons, we ask that you approve funding for the Amtrak Cascades line and allow passenger rail service to continue at Oregon City uninterrupted. Thank you for your consideration.

On behalf of the Board of Directors,

Kent Ziegler, President  
Kntzig001@aol.com  
(503) 701-9716

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