

**Testimony of Councilor Carlotta Collette
In Support of Amtrak Cascades funding in HB 5040
Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation and
Economic Development, March 30, 2015**



Co-Chairs Johnson and Gomberg and Members of the Committee:

As members of the Oregon Transportation Forum, the Metro Council strongly supports the OTF's proposed 2015 transportation funding and policy package. I am testifying today on behalf of the Metro Council to urge your support for one element of that proposed package: including funding to continue Amtrak Cascades service in the Oregon Department of Transportation's budget.

Amtrak Cascades provides important multimodal connections to travelers and commuters to/from the Portland metropolitan region while enhancing the vitality of communities along its route. I serve as the elected Metro Councilor for District 2, which covers most of the urbanized portion of Clackamas County, including one community along the Cascades route, Oregon City.

Oregon City is one the fastest growing cities in our state and the only designated Regional Center without a connection to TriMet high-capacity transit. Amtrak Cascades service provides residents of Oregon City with a climate smart option for commuting, making the city more appealing to the growing population we must accommodate in the region. Additionally, investment in the redevelopment of the former Blue Heron Paper Mill site adjacent to Willamette Falls will make Oregon City a top tourist destination in the near future, generating additional trips along this route. Facilitating access for these visitors is essential.

Oregon recently spent \$36.6 million in federal stimulus funds to purchase two train sets to add to the trains owned by Washington and Amtrak in order to augment service in the Cascades corridor to meet demand. It would be unfortunate to waste this investment by failing to provide funding for continued operation of the service.

The economic health of the region depends upon adequate funding for all modes of transportation, including the critical service provided by Amtrak. For these reasons, on behalf of the Metro Council, I urge your support for full funding of Amtrak Cascades.

Thank you very much for your consideration of these comments.