



MAYOR'S OFFICE

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March 26, 2015

To: Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development
The Honorable Betsy Johnson, Co- Chair
The Honorable David Gomberg, Co-Chair

Re: HB5040 – Section 3. Rail Division's Passenger Rail Program

When public funds are used to invest in intercity passenger rail the investment generates economic impacts that affect the state's economy, employment, people's income and business profits. As Mayor for The City of Salem I am fortunate to live within walking distance of City Hall. Most people are not so fortunate and many of our citizens have to travel up and down the Willamette Valley corridor to work or for business. Indeed, in 2013, 6% of the Amtrak Cascades riders were commuting to work, 6% were commuting to or from school and 12% were traveling via train on business. The Amtrak Cascades Service from Eugene to Portland, through Salem, provides our citizenry with an alternate mode of transportation for business and employment; however it also aids in the reduction of congestion on our roadways and reduces greenhouse gas emissions---a car emits twice as many CO2 emissions as trains!

The Amtrak Cascades Service provides the City of Salem, as well as other cities on the line, opportunities for tourism as riders from as far north as Vancouver, British Columbia come to our beautiful City via rail. The five stations in Oregon, Salem being one, benefit from direct travel spending from day and over-night travelers. The annual estimate of direct travel spending from October 2013 to September 2014 in Oregon was \$31.2 million. We hope that will increase as tourism increases in our beautiful State. Indeed, on March 23, 2105 the City of Salem City Council adopted Resolution No. 2015-14 which supports the reopening of the Willamette Falls Locks. I understand the number of visitors to the Willamette Falls Locks area is expected to flourish as the area is developed and that Amtrak Cascades Service provides crucial access for tourists. Given access to the rail system those same tourists have the opportunity to continue travel along the Willamette Valley Corridor; stopping to enjoy our beautiful City of Salem and its activities then travelling further to other cities and attractions. In 2013 23% of the riders were traveling via train for vacation, pleasure, and/or recreation. As we continue to strengthen our tourism industry and develop new attractions, such as the Willamette Falls Locks, the Amtrak Cascades Service becomes an even more integral part of Oregon's transportation system---it provides an enjoyable, easy and affordable means to explore Oregon.

I, personally, have traveled via Amtrak to visit family; I am among the 36% of travelers that utilize the Amtrak Cascades Service to visit friends or relatives. On behalf of riders, such as myself, regional commuters and prospective vacationers and sightseers I ask that you

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maintain adequate funding for this vital program. Any interruption to the rail service could result in severe decreases in tourism and economic activity in the State of Oregon and our beautiful City of Salem. The Amtrak Cascades Service is the backbone of intercity travel in Oregon. It connects to the transit systems in Portland (TriMet), Salem (Cherriots), and Eugene (Lane Transit District) providing riders easy and affordable transportation alternatives and promoting tourism in our cities. Funding the Amtrak Cascades Service supports our citizenry's current needs for public transportation but it also fosters future economic vitality, provides continued access for commuters and aids in the continued reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. I support the Amtrak Cascade Service and respectfully request your support to continue funding as needed for this vital service to Oregon and its citizens.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anna M. Peterson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Anna M. Peterson
Mayor