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March 30, 2015

Joint Committee on Ways and Means Sub-committee on Transportation and Economic Development  
Co-Chairs State Senator Betsy Johnson and State Representative David Gomberg  
900 Court St NE  
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Request for State support for funding Amtrak Cascades Service

Co-Chairs Johnson and Gomberg and Joint Committee Members,

The Oregon City Chamber of Commerce seeks the support necessary to maintain Amtrak Cascades Service from Eugene to Portland through Oregon City. It is our understanding that this service route with important connections to Seattle, WA, and Vancouver, BC, could be in serious jeopardy later this year. Losing the Amtrak service through Oregon City would cripple our community and regional efforts in economic development.

This linkage for both tourism and commuter travel are key elements in Oregon City's economic future. In fact, there are at least four key elements in play that will be hampered by the potential loss of the Amtrak Cascades stop in Oregon City. The Willamette Falls Legacy Project is a game changer for this region and will provide unprecedented access to Willamette Falls to our local citizens, but more importantly to tourists. Transportation options are important to visitors; eliminating passenger rail as a mode of transportation will have a negative ripple effect.

While the Legacy Project redevelopment effort will be the center of attention, there are several other efforts underway in which immediate access to Amtrak Cascades is important. Two brownfields in Oregon City, one a former quarry and one a former landfill, appear to be on the cusp of securing relationships to make these economic prospects reality. It is not by accident that these development opportunities are within close proximity to the Amtrak Cascades station in Oregon City.

Oregon City was selected as a new passenger rail station site in 2000. Since that time, the City of Oregon City has made significant financial investments in the Amtrak site. The station is located across the street from the End of the Oregon Trail Interpretive and Visitor Center and is being prepared as a bicycle-themed marketplace and bistro. Cycling is a growing sector of tourism and our entrepreneurs and businesses have been actively preparing for this eventuality.

There is likely no greater challenge for legislators than to balance a budget. At this critical time, we respectfully request the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Sub-committee on Transportation and Economic Development include in the budget, funding to maintain the Amtrak Cascades Service from Eugene to Portland. Thank you for your time and attention on this important transportation funding issue and its connection to Oregon City's economic future.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amber D. Holveck', is written over a horizontal line.

Amber D. Holveck  
Executive Director