

June 15, 2015

HB 2075A-Engrossed--- consideration by Ways and Means Joint Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development

Co-chairs Gomberg, Johnson and Committee members:

Please support HB 2075A-Engrossed as amended by the Revenue Committee. It is my understanding this amendment resulted from negotiation whereby representatives of the Port of Portland and Alaska Airlines sought and were granted an amendment whereby they gained a 50% share of the tax income from this legislation, and agreed not to further contest the bill to scalp more of the revenues from it. Yet now they want more. Now they want a further 25% right off the top.

To the airlines and the Port, a fuel tax is a pass-through expense.

To rural Oregon's small community general aviation airports, and related economic development efforts, this legislation is about survival.

This modest tax was amended at the request of the airlines and the Port of Portland to reduce future funding for rural airports by 50% and now they want more. Please say no.

There is enough corporate welfare. For the Port of Portland, a desire to further amend the bill to get more money is particularly shameless. The Port in prior legislation sought and was granted "quasi-public" corporation status. This allows them the freedom to act essentially as a private business yet reap the benefits of a state agency, exempt from taxes, and oversight, yet retaining all sorts of state agency advantages including PERS. The management at the Port is paid exceptionally with no operational oversight and control by Ways and Means. A visit to their offices clearly indicates the amount of money to which they have access.

Not so the rural communities of this state.

Please pass HB2075A-Engrossed and invest in Oregon's statewide aviation infrastructure and system, and economic development statewide.

Respectfully,

Steve Beckham