



Oregon  
Environmental  
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**Written Testimony to the Joint Ways & Means  
Transportation & Economic Development Committee  
on SB Bill 5540**

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Oregon Environmental Council**

Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance innovative, collaborative and equitable solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

The Amtrak Cascades service between Eugene and Portland will shut down this year without a state contribution of \$8.735 million. If trains are eliminated, it will be very difficult and expensive to reinstate service in the future. The Amtrak Cascades corridor from Eugene to Vancouver, BC accommodates some 800,000 passengers each year, with the Portland to Eugene portion accounting for about 15% of the total. Amtrak Cascades also provides tangible economic benefits. It spurs spending on travel (more than \$35 million in 2009, according to government transportation reports). It generates \$1 million in local tax revenues and \$2 million in state tax revenues. It creates an estimated 600 jobs. It curtails roadway costs by reducing wear-and-tear. And it curbs the state's carbon emissions.

What Cascades Amtrak really represents is a critical aspect of the future of transportation. It isn't the only solution to rush-hour gridlock on I-5, but does provide an important tool for addressing Oregon's daunting transportation challenges and helping the system become more efficient, resilient, and environmentally sound.

We hope you will support ODOT's request of \$8.735, the bare minimum needed to keep our trains running.