

Tuesday, March 28, 2017

Chair Johnson and honored members of the Joint Committee On Ways and Means, Sub-Committee On Transportation and Economic Development.

Thank you for your work on this difficult task of allocating funds for the transportation issues across Oregon. I am here today to ask for your support for the PDX-EUG Cascades Rail Corridor which provides both an economic and ecological function. Rail transportation is an efficient means of moving people without adding freeway lanes for single driver vehicles. Fully optimizing our existing infrastructure could limit pollution and save farmland along I-5.

Incentivizing passenger rail use through subsidies will continue to lead to a greater diversity of transportation models and build a foundation for a generation that is less reliant on personal vehicles. Ideally, Oregon's inter-city rail system can be utilized in much the same way as Washington State, whose passenger and freight trains share the rails with ridership increasing yearly.

Personally, riding the Amtrak Cascades route from Oregon City to Olympia, Washington a few times a year to visit family, I am impressed with the cleanliness and efficiency of the service, despite the occasional delay due to freight train activity. Centennial Station in Lacey/Olympia is an excellent model of volunteers in action. Our family has also used this route between Salem and Oregon City for visits with grandchildren.

Oregon City recently re-opened their station, providing those waiting and departing trains a safe, warm environment and is a gateway to our many museums and recreational activities including biking and kayaking.

As you know tourism is a major economic factor in Oregon, especially in historic Oregon City. Speaking on behalf of the Oregon City Business Alliance, we appreciate the effort our community has invested in our heritage attractions. The State, too, has invested in The Willamette Falls Legacy Project which will provide pedestrian access to Willamette Falls. A mix of transportation modes will continue to enable visitors to reach these sites, not only in Oregon City but throughout the Willamette Valley.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration on this important funding issue. On behalf of the Oregon City Business Alliance, and personally, we ask for your support in funding this essential rail corridor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joyce Gifford", written in a cursive style.

Joyce Gifford  
Oregon City, OR