

## **INFINITE AIR CENTER, LLC**

Tony Hann, Operations Manager

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### **TO: SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES REGARDING: SB 115 MEETING ON 02/15/2017**

## **HONORED CHAIR AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS,**

As a small business owner serving the General Aviation community with location in Albany Municipal Airport and Mulino State Airport, I would like to address the issues set forth in SB 115 and its effect on majority of General Aviation aircrafts and its local economic benefits as this bill makes it illegal to use, sell, or possess any form of leaded aviation fuel after January 1, 2022.

General Aviation, which comprise mainly of piston powered aircrafts rely heavily on 100 Octane Low Lead aviation fuel (AVGAS) with lead primarily used as a lubricant for its internal combustion engines. FAA and General Aviation leaders are seeking an Unleaded alternative solution at this time with no definite timeline on availability as FAA mandated testing is required to safely operate an aircraft. Even when an alternative fuel has been approved and certified for use in General Aviation aircraft, distribution of approved fuel will be limited at best initially.

There currently is an alternative fuel available in testing with distribution framework being sought after by the producer. However, this particular fuel alternative is refined in the State of Illinois so until additional refineries are brought online, increased transportation costs to bring the product into the State of Oregon is prohibitive.

With limited access to the alternative fuel, when approved by FAA and certified, I would like to stress that setting a timeline of January 1, 2022 as presented on this bill will be detrimental to General Aviation community as a whole.

As pilots flying in and around the State of Oregon rely primarily on AVGAS, a total prohibition on AVGAS before an alternative is readily available will mean that pilots will fuel up elsewhere such as Washington State, Idaho, and California. This will mean all AVGAS taxes and economic benefits provided by pilots flying will be reduced drastically as pilots will avoid State of Oregon as it is a necessity to fuel for their flights.

2/15/2017

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Pilots flying in and around the state provide numerous economic benefits to the local community. A study was performed by Oregon Department of Aviation (ODA) in 2014 analyzing these benefits based on 2012 traffic and the impact is considerable. For year 2012, Economic Contribution of Oregon Airports to the Oregon Economy, not including PDX, was \$3,625,319,000. This figure of over \$3.6B includes Spin-off Effects of supplier and Income Re-spending. Direct Effects of On-airport Aviation Activities and Visitor Spending is over \$2B. PDX alone had a total impact of \$8.7B in 2012.

Even though PDX mainly serves airlines operating under Part 121 and is not generally considered General Aviation, pilots flying for major airlines all train with piston powered aircraft. Without proper training available in the State of Oregon, and with forecasted pilot shortage, State of Oregon is bound to lose tremendous benefit by simply prohibiting AVGAS without an alternative solution that is currently in the works.

As a small business owner of 2 years, I employ a full time mechanic and two part time mechanics in addition to seasonal help during peak months. If General Aviation activity is curtailed or eliminated by SB 115, we will be forced to close our doors and lay off our employees. This will happen all across the State of Oregon and the economic benefit will be lost.

What non-flying public fails to realize is that General Aviation is essential for public services. Fire fighting, fire spotting, agricultural spraying, aerial surveys, aerial reconnaissance, wildlife counting, and many other rely on General Aviation aircraft fueled by AVGAS.

Oregon Pilots Association (OPA), in conjunction with public departments and other states are also planning on assisting during catastrophic events such as Cascadia Event and countless volunteers have signed up to assist with surveys and photographs of key state infrastructure. Without AVGAS, these cannot happen.

Finally, Oregon Department of Aviation is funded by aviation fuel taxes and with lack of funding, key airports will deteriorate and be obsolete. Even when an alternative fuel is available after January 1, 2022, our airports will not be capable of sustaining operation without major investment in infrastructure.

As a business owner contributing to the economy and in touch with many pilots flying in and around the State of Oregon, I would like to urge you to give the FAA and the market sufficient time to have infrastructure in place before completely prohibiting AVGAS use.

**SINCERELY,**

**Tony Hann**