



Senate Committee on Business and Transportation

On behalf of Washington County Board of Commissioners we offer the following comments on SB 128, which creates a separate division or layer of an elected Port Authority for Hillsboro and Troutdale airports.

Hillsboro Airport has grown to become an integral part of the region's transportation system, providing the highest standard of general aviation facilities to businesses and residents of Washington County and beyond. The airport is home to several local corporate flight departments, aircraft charter services for business travel, wildland fire response, air ambulance services, television news helicopters, flight schools, aircraft maintenance and repair operations, a corporate air shuttle service, and a U.S. Customs and Border Protection office for international flights.

More than 25 businesses operate at the airport. In 2016, the Hillsboro airport supported more than 198,000 flights, making it the second busiest airport in the state. Established in 1928, the airport was privately operated and later purchased by the City of Hillsboro. The Port took over operation of the airport in 1966. The airport has three runways, a Federal Aviation Administration air traffic control tower and an instrument landing system. The most recent economic impact study shows that the airport generated 1,472 jobs at the airport and in the community, \$83.5 million in personal income, and \$107.4 million in business revenue.

Washington County is concerned about SB 128 and the potential to recreate a port infrastructure that is already in place and a potential for a local government financial commitment to run a new Port Authority. We believe expertise that the Port of Portland has in place cannot be replaced by a new entity whether it's an elected or appointed. The Port of Portland has been a critical partner for Washington County and we do not find it necessary to change the current governance and believe the structure in place today is working well.

We are well aware of the issues associated with operating an airport because of our work with the Port on existing processes such as the Hillsboro Airport Roundtable (HARE). HARE included interests from the community, city, county leaders and others. In addition, the Hillsboro Airport Master Planning process will kick off next week and we are looking forward to helping shape Hillsboro Airport's future. The Port has been very deliberate in their outreach efforts and contact with the community and Washington County believes the current system works well.

Like any public process, not every interest group gets what they want, but from our vantage point the Port makes every effort possible to listen, provide information and make decisions that balance community, business and Port interests. Much of the current debate over Hillsboro Airport and I suspect others does focus on the community impacts relative to flight paths, use of flight operation curfews, and fuel type, but authority over these decisions are well beyond the Port and rest with the FAA and other regulatory agencies.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jim McCauley
Washington County Government Relations