



February 11, 2020

To: Co-Chair Beyer, Co-Chair McKeown and Members of the Joint Committee on Transportation

From: Jason Wallis, Chief of Police, Port of Portland

Re: Passenger Terminal at Portland International Airport, **HB 4036, -12 Amendment**

Co-Chairs and Members of the Joint Committee on Transportation,

My name is Jason Wallis. I am the Chief of Police at the Port of Portland. I appreciate the opportunity to be here today, and to testify on this important issue. I am a 25 years law enforcement veteran, 23 years of those serving at the Port of Portland police department; 5 years ago I was named chief of police of the Port of Portland police.

My job – and the job of our police officers – at the Port of Portland is that of your typical police bureau: we enforce traffic laws on our properties, for example, and are generally speaking the law enforcement agency responsible for public safety at our properties. Most of our work is centered on Portland International Airport, or PDX. My number one priority is to ensure the safety of everyone who utilizes our facilities.

And this is a diverse and large group of people. PDX will soon surpass 20 Million passengers annually. To put that number in perspective: on average, 55,000 passengers travel through PDX on a daily basis. That number is passengers leaving or arriving via airplanes and does not count their families and friends dropping them off or picking them up, or the nearly 11,000 people who work at PDX – from the airlines, airline services providers, the many great restaurants at PDX, or the Port of Portland. PDX has truly become a large airport – and we will continue to grow, as the region will continue to grow.

This growth means we have to be even more diligent about public safety.

The -12 amendment to HB 4036 helps us do just that. It fixes a simple glitch in statute, and would make the passenger terminal a public building for the purposes of ORS 166.360. Let me be specific about what part of the terminal we are referencing. If this glitch is fixed, the following would be considered part of our public building: the doors coming into the terminal, our ticket lobby and baggage claim, our restaurants, restrooms and shops located pre-security, and essentially anything else before you officially go through TSA security (where you already can't bring a firearm).

Mission: To enhance the region's economy and quality of life
by providing efficient cargo and air passenger access
to national and global markets, and by promoting industrial development.

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This would bring us in line with our partners across the state. The proposed fix in the -12 amendment would make our passenger terminal at PDX the same as the Eugene airport passenger terminal, or Redmond and Medford airports – where the terminals are already public buildings because they are operated by either city or county agencies; we are a municipality of the state of Oregon, which is the issue we want to address.

The proposed fix would make it so that our passenger terminal would essentially be just like the Capitol – you could still bring a firearm into the terminal if you are a law enforcement officer, or a CHL holder for example – although I want to make it clear that it is really not a great idea to bring firearms into an airport, let alone open carry. Nothing would change for passengers trying to safely check a firearm with an airline: the same procedures that apply to this situation today would still apply tomorrow.

Ultimately, this is about the safety of our passengers at PDX. Large numbers of people congregate in our passenger terminal, and this simple fix in statute would allow us to provide an additional layer of security to further protect the safety of our passengers – many of them, at any given moment, standing in line with their shoes and boarding pass in hand, waiting to go through TSA security to enter into what we call the sterile parts of the passenger terminal, where firearms are not allowed in the first place. You can probably envision what this part of our airport looks like on our busiest days, where we see closer to 70 or 80,000 travelers come through PDX.

While we haven't had many incidences at PDX yet, we are hoping to fix this before something happens.

Thank you for your consideration of the -12 amendment. I'd be happy to answer any questions.