



Date: February 11, 2020

To: Sen. Lee Beyer Co-Chair
Rep. Caddy McKeown Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Transportation

From: Charles Deister, representing Southwest Oregon Regional Airport

The Southwest Oregon Regional Airport supports HB 4036 as introduced. Specifically, it supports removing the sunset on the 2¢/gallon aviation fuel tax increase enacted in 2015. The SW Oregon Regional Airport also supports adding an additional 2¢/gallon to aviation fuel taxes to support aviation infrastructure, particularly at rural airports.

While removing the sunset is important, aviation is already losing funds. No funds were appropriated last session for aviation through Connect Oregon and there is no near-term expectation that the Legislature will be able to provide funds through Connect Oregon to make up this lost funding.

Southwest Oregon Regional Airport views the additional 2¢/gallon increase in the aviation fuel tax as the only way to provide a dedicated and secure funding stream for airports across Oregon. According to the Oregon Department of Aviation, an additional 2¢/gallon would generate \$4M per year, or \$8M per biennium.

Aviation fuel taxes support grant programs administered by the Oregon Department of Aviation that have rehabilitated runways and taxiways, improved lighting, and helped support expensive airport planning and resiliency efforts. Without this funding, rural communities would lose an important source of funds to maintain their airports.

Oregon's airports provide citizens with connections to the rest of the state, the country and the world. Rural airports are important for general aviation and providing critical bases for fire-fighting operations. And some have commercial air service or the ability to attract that service in the future. These facilities need a secure funding stream for important maintenance and upgrades to enhance safety and allow for greater use.

Thank you for your consideration of HB 4036 as introduced.

Charles Deister
(503) 949-5762
cdeister@pilotstrat.com