

February 19, 2023

Chair Grayber, Vice-Chairs Lewis and Tran, and other committee members:

For the record my name is Shauna Edwards. I am the owner of Rivers Run Gas in Detroit, Oregon. I am writing in support of an amendment to House Bill 2426. While I fully support House Bill 2426, I would like to share our unique challenges in Detroit and why an amendment to allow 24/7 self-service fuel at Rivers Run is needed in our community.

Rivers Run Gas Station is located at 105 Breitenbush Road, Detroit, Oregon 97342 in the rural mountains of the Santiam Forest. I purchased the gas station in 1993 and remodeled the business into a large log cabin one-stop deli, gas station and mini mart with old fashion charm. Prior to the 2020 Beechie Creek fire, Rivers Run provided essential amenities for businesses, truckers and vacation travelers along Highway 22 for well over three decades.

Rivers Run was an essential stop for many, a pitstop for business workers—especially during the off season—to fuel up ahead of a long day or night ahead along the winding road of Highway 22. It was also a landmark kind of location, where holiday travelers would stop fill their tanks, order a meal and a drink and sit on the deck overlooking Detroit Lake. We were open 7 days a week from 7 am to 7 pm and operating with 5-6 employees during the high summer season, which was critical to carrying the business through the slower, unprofitable winter months.

**The 2020 Beechie Creek fire burned my entire business to the ground. I lost everything,** including:

- The entire 2 story ~2,000 square foot main building and large deck, 2 outside buildings, work shed, and the cement foundation
- All gas pumps, propane tank, all electrical, plumbing, security cameras, industrial refrigerators, all industrial deli, freezer and refrigerators, espresso machine, etc.

Given the essential services Rivers Run provides, and the fact that people travel all hours of the day and night along Highway 22, I was quick to rebuild. I replaced the cement, gas pumps and lines and electrical and put temporary storage containers on site to lock the cash register, and also established food service. The cost to fully rebuild the business is in far excess of insurance payments. Furthermore, the business has been operating at a loss due to a much lower volume of customers, which is further challenged by significant headwind due to a shortage of people seeking employment.

**The 2020 Beechie Creek fire impacted customer volume and availability of people seeking work.**

- Prior to the fire, Rivers Run pumped ~300,000-350,000 gallons per year; not a lot but enough to carry most of the core gas-related operating expenses
- Post-fire, we pump ~100,000 gallons annually and are operating at a loss
- We are experiencing a smaller number of visitors to the Detroit Lake area, which is still recovering from the aftermath of the fire with less desirable areas to camp and vacation
- We cannot employ enough people to work; less people are seeking work and the shortage and relatively high cost of housing in the surrounding areas is not helping

If Rivers Run continues to lose money it will be difficult to stay in business. Hiring people to run the business 24/7 is not possible or sustainable. It is apparent that travelers are in need of gas 24/7. I know this because travelers call our number after hours desperate for gas. It is impossible for me to be on call to service gas at all hours of the night. I am fighting for my business, my sole source of income, and the many travelers who will be in need of gas after hours, high in the Santiam Forest.

I am very happy for House Bill 2426 and the owners of gas stations and their travelers in the other rural areas of Oregon allowed to self-service. It seems reasonable that Rivers Run, located in an equally rural area, high in the Santiam Forest—where travelers depend on gas 24/7—is also be included on the list.

Sincerely,

Shauna Edwards  
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