

Submitter: Jennifer Albright  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation  
Measure: HB4109

THIS TESTIMONY IS IN REGARD TO HB 4109-4 SECTION 5 (1) The Department of Transportation shall pursue cooperative efforts with the State of Idaho to obtain assistance from the Federal Railroad Administration to restore service on the Amtrak Pioneer Line.

"I 84 closed from La Grande to Ontario..." an announcement dreaded by travelers in Baker City. In winter it is the weather and at other times accidents or oil spills that cause hours of delay on the Freeway. How good it would be to avoid this problem by taking the passenger train to one's destination! By the time I relocated to Baker City from South Africa, the Amtrak Pioneer Line was a distant memory for people in Baker City. As I still had children and an elderly mother in South Africa, I had to drive to Boise to catch a plane for my annual visits. As the day of departure approached, I was increasingly nervous - would I 84 be closed? To be able to get to Boise by train and not have to pay a large amount for parking my car while away, would be wonderful. Many people in Baker County do not own a car or are unable to drive for one reason or another. Others, conscious of the environmental impact, try to avoid the congestion and pollution caused by motor traffic.

Baker City's passenger train depot is in very good condition and a recent petition conducted among its residents, showed huge support for the restoration of the Pioneer Line. Baker County is very beautiful and has a high cultural value - attractions such as the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center, Baker City Historic District and Anthony Lakes ski resort would benefit tremendously from passenger rail tourism. I believe that the lives of the people of Eastern Oregon would be greatly enhanced by passenger train travel to areas such as Portland, Boise and onwards to the greater United States. We urgently need Oregon Department of Transportation to work with the State of Idaho to obtain assistance from the Federal Railroad Administration to restore service on the Amtrak Pioneer Line. I respectfully ask you to support this amendment