

Submitter: Susan Bolgiano  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation  
Measure: HB4109

This testimony is in support of 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 live in Halfway, Oregon, a small rural community 50 miles from Baker City, Oregon. At the present time, I have to drive five hours to the nearest Amtrak Station (Pasco, WA) to board a train that begins my journey across the country to Maryland where my family resides. It would be so much easier to drive an hour to Baker City, hop a train and make connections to the east coast along the Pioneer Passenger Rail line. Accessing major hospitals and specialists and other services and amenities has become more necessary and frequent. It is a three-hour drive to Boise. Driving is becoming more difficult as I age. The I-85 corridor is closed more often due to ever increasing hazardous winter driving conditions.

Rail helps improve air quality, provides a cleaner environment, and helps reverse climate change. Passenger rail is 3 times more efficient than a car on a passenger mile basis at current occupancy levels. Freight rail is 11 times more efficient than trucks on a ton-mile basis. Transportation accounts for 29% of U. S. greenhouse gas emissions. Investment in rail and other public transportation is a key part of making transportation cleaner. The quickest way to reduce greenhouse gasses from transportation is to travel by train, and move goods by rail, instead of by roads or air. In addition to these environmental benefits, improved passenger rail will provide economic benefits, and underserved communities will reap improved equity as well.

The need for rail transportation to this poorly served area (the least well served in the country) has grown.

I look forward to the time when I am able to hop a train only an hour away to travel to Portland or Boise and back East to visit family.

Thank you.  
Susan Bolgiano  
Halfway, Oregon