

February 23, 2024

Submitted to: Oregon State Legislature, Salem, Oregon
From: Ian Kluft, Portland, Oregon
Subject: Support for SB 1548 Permanent Standard Time

Dear Honorable Senators,

Please support SB 1548 to enact Permanent Standard Time in Oregon.

The twice-per-year clock changes are at least annoying and an interruption to people's circadian rhythm (daily sleep cycles). Studies also show it's also the cause of increased vehicle accidents and health problems including heart attacks at those times of year. We need to end the clock changes.

The reason I'm asking you to choose permanent Standard Time is because it follows nature by its definition. For quick background, time zones are generally defined by 24 one-hour-wide portions of the globe. With 360 degrees of longitude in total, each hour represents 15 degrees. Oregon's geographic position is 8 hours behind UTC (the Coordinated Universal Time standard). Our time zone is centered on the meridian at 120° West longitude. On the line, average solar noon is equal to noon Standard Time. All of Oregon is within the 15-degree wide area centered at 120°W. See the attached map.

Some arguments for so-called Daylight Saving Time (DST) cite examples of sunrise or sunset times in a specific locality. However, keep in mind that Oregon covers an area large enough to have varying sunrise and sunset times. There is never more daylight than what we naturally get at Oregon's latitude. DST shifts the clock and sunrise/sunset times by an hour. An hour given to evening activities is taken away from morning activities. That line of reasoning will never rise above arbitrariness.

The best that can be done to evenly and fairly split available daylight between early and late activities and the eastern and western sides of the state is to put local clock noon at average solar noon. And that is the definition of Standard Time. It's as fair a compromise as we'll ever find on this issue. After that, those who still insist on daylight for their activities should be encouraged to look up their local sunrise and sunset times and schedule around them. That's the best we can do.

Another regional issue is if or when neighboring states also switch to permanent Standard Time. It seems no one wants to go first or alone. I saw SB 1548 has proposed amendments, one which would require both California and Washington to join before it goes into effect. The other needs either California or Washington, not necessarily both. I suggest the either-or option because whichever two states pass it, the third will undoubtedly go along. The issue will push itself at that point.

Also be aware that SB 1548 currently only covers the Pacific Time portion of Oregon. But Idaho is also considering permanent Standard Time statewide. If or when that occurs, Oregon will need to quickly follow with another bill covering its Mountain Time portion in Malheur County so that Oregon residents in the vicinity of Boise keep the same time as their region. At that time it may be simpler to reword the law as a statewide permanent Standard Time, dropping reference to Pacific or Mountain.

Please enact permanent Standard Time by passing SB 1548 during this legislative session.

