

Submitter: James Wilcox
On Behalf Of: Columbia Gorge Regional Airport
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB482

Columbia Gorge Regional Airport has been an Oregon airport as designated by the FAA and confirmed by legislation in both the Oregon and Washington Legislatures in the 1940s. The City of The Dalles took ownership of the airport when the federal government declared the airport surplus after WWII. Although the ownership of the airport became shared with Klickitat County Washington shortly after the turn of the 21st century it remains an Oregon airport.

Columbia Gorge Community College successfully serves the entire region providing training and education to the entire region. Many of its programs train local residents for careers in health care, computer science, various electricity related fields. With a projected demand of over 130,000 aircraft mechanic jobs in the next 15 years CGCC is offering education in a field that has immediate employment opportunities at wage levels higher than most 4 year degrees.

The site of some of the Air Frame and Power Plant instruction is separated from our Oregon city by the Columbia River and a distance of less than one mile. The Dalles has no geographically suitable land for an airport the size of the historically Oregon owned airport.

There is no justification for denying financial support to an Oregon community college providing educational opportunities to Oregon residents at an Oregon municipality owned facility. Instructional funds are already supporting programs that allow students to get practical experience at private facilities in other states. (i.e. nursing practicums in Washington hospitals) Oregon State University, University of Oregon, Portland State University and other Oregon community colleges offer instruction via the internet to anywhere in the world with internet service. Public funding supports those programs.

I strongly urge passage of SB482 to direct funds to Oregon Education Institutions regardless of the site of the delivery of the instruction. .