

Submitter: Peter Fargo
On Behalf Of: Neighbors for Safer Healthier Happier Baker City
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation
Measure: SB16

I would like to express my support for SB 16, especially to explore funding options to bring passenger rail service back to as many communities as possible in Eastern Oregon, including my own Baker City.

In addition to the transportation benefits, passenger rail service would provide important economic and social opportunities for the people of Eastern Oregon, as it would offer another exciting experience and destination for in-state and out-of-state tourists. It would also be a competitive asset for companies considering whether to locate in Eastern Oregon communities. Further, it would improve the quality of life of residents who cannot drive or prefer not to drive. Beyond those reasons, there is the inestimable value of restoring this traditional (and fun!) mode of western travel as well as the social and civic connections it promotes across our vast region.

Will you also continue to support railroad Quiet Zones to improve the safety, health, and quality of life of Eastern Oregon communities with train service? For several years, I have been working with Baker City and fellow citizens to establish a Quiet Zone in Baker City, a status that La Grande and Pendleton already enjoy. Last year, the Baker City Council voted to establish the Quiet Zone, based on the health benefits, low cost, and proven safety record of Quiet Zones across the nation. Citizens are now working to raise the remaining funds to implement the project. We love trains, and we know the railroad can once again be a positive asset in our community. Our quiet zone, combined with passenger rail service, would be a dream come true.

In future legislation, would you consider directing ODOT to assist Quiet Zone communities by ensuring future passenger rail service honors existing Quiet Zones? There may be a number of administrative steps required, and associated costs. The burden can be heavy for small communities on a tight budget, such as Baker City.

Thank you for your service in the Oregon Legislative Assembly, and thank you for considering this opportunity to restore passenger rail service to Eastern Oregon.

Very respectfully,
Peter Fargo

On behalf of Neighbors for a Safer, Healthier, and Happier (Shh) Baker City