

Submitter: Alec Culbertson

On Behalf Of: Columbia Gorge Community College

Committee: Senate Committee On Education

Measure: SB482

Hello, my name is Alec Culbertson. I am a student in the Aviation Maintenance Technology program at Columbia Gorge Community College. Thank you for listening to my testimony in support of Senate Bill 482– which would allow the AMT program to conduct coursework and training at Columbia Gorge Regional Airport, less than 1 mile from the college campus.

To find the natural landscape of aviation maintenance, we must look within the airport environment. It is highly logical and easy to understand how access to the airport for learning will benefit our aviation maintenance training program. Delivering education within a setting relevant to the instruction is valuable. Witnessing standard industry practices from professional AMTs will enhance the quality of student experiences.

Engaging with the aviation ecosystem allows students to observe and participate in the realistic use of aviation language, safety procedures, and aircraft logistics. The ability to become proficient in any skill is directly correlated with hands-on practical application. I think of a quote from legendary Bruce Lee, “I fear not the man who has practiced 10,000 kicks once, but I fear the man who has practiced one kick 10,000 times.”

An accessible workspace with on-site availability to industry-relevant equipment and technology is fundamental to any program. An aircraft hangar will give us the space to accommodate real-life aircraft. We have a fully functional Piper aircraft that was donated to the college specifically for the AMT program, but it sits, unutilized at the airport where we’re not allowed to conduct education. The airport setting is functional, with space layouts designed in accordance with aviation maintenance policies and regulations that will enable students to learn how to properly utilize the tools, equipment, and technology of the trade.

In the end, it makes sense to pass the bill. Personally, the thought of learning at a physical airport outweighs learning in our current warehouse. The quality and comprehension of aviation skills are empowered within an industry-specific location like this airport.