

HB3260A Testimony – SUPPORT

Chair Manning, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and committee members: My name is Ed Diehl, State Representative for House District 17, East Salem through the majestic Santiam Canyon. Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of House Bill 3260A. I also want to thank Representative Pham for his co-sponsorship of this bill, which had strong bipartisan support from the House.

HB 3260A would allow the City of Detroit, Oregon to have a 24/7 self-serve fueling operation for a limited period of time. The bill reflects the very unique situation facing this community that has been devastated by the 2020 wildfires.

Because it is located in Marion County, the town of Detroit, Oregon does not qualify for self-serve fuel under the prior HB 2482 passed in 2017 for rural counties in Eastern Oregon. Also, HB 2426 that recently passed the House this session, to allow stations to operate up to half their pumps as self-serve, would not solve the issue in Detroit either.

The Rivers Run gas station in Detroit has always been the “last chance” for fuel as you head up the canyon on vacation over to Bend. It is also the first chance to get gas after the long drive over the pass on your return trip to the valley. I imagine several of you in this room have fueled up at Rivers Run, sometimes even running on gas vapors as you navigate the snow and ice.

Rivers Run was destroyed in the wildfire, including the gas pumps, store, and the apartment used by workers. The owner, Shauna Edwards, used much of her insurance money to reestablish fuel service as soon as possible. She spent \$500,000 on new, state of the art, self-service capable pumps. Shauna understood the vital service that the gas station provides not only for travelers, but also for local residents of Detroit and Idanha. The next nearest station is in Mill City, a 20-mile drive West.

Unfortunately, Shauna has been challenged to find staff for the pumps. She is 75, and is physically unable to handle the job. She would be here today however she has some medical issues which have taken her out of the area. She has part-time help, Dawn Hatt-Nickell, who testified in support of this bill in the House (Dawn accidentally registered as Oppose on OLIS, but absolutely supports this bill). But

even with this help, the station is unattended at times most people would expect a station to be open.

Shauna reopened this station because she understands that bringing business back to wildfire ravaged areas is key to economic recovery and wildfire resilience. Her station also serves a public safety need, providing fuel for generators and public safety equipment. As Dawn Hatt-Nickell, Shauna's sole employee, shared with me, she can't stand the thought of someone freezing to death just because they ran out of gas. They leave a phone number for people at the station to call during off-hours. Dawn will come over to pump your gas if she can. And if she's not available, sometimes a friend from Mill City has made the 20 mile drive to Detroit to pump gas.

HB 3260A would allow Rivers Run to provide self-service fuel on a 24/7 basis. It is written such that the only fueling station in the state meeting the criteria resides in Detroit. And please note that this bill has a sunset clause so it will expire at the end of 2028. By that time we fully expect Detroit to be built back better than ever, bustling with businesses, vacationers, and residents!

The community wants this. The mayor of Detroit (Jim Trett) is strongly in favor of this and one of the city councilmen (Denny Nielsen) testified in the support at the House hearing but was unable to make it today. The county commissioners want this. The state fire marshal is OK with this. Travelers in dire need of fuel on a late Sunday afternoon or in the middle of the night in freezing weather want this. It is the right answer for recovery, resiliency, and public safety.

I urge you to vote for HB3260A. Thank you for your time.