

Submitter: Susan Bolgiano
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3231

I am a representative from Eastern Oregon of a grass-roots group named Panhandle4Passenger Rail located in Halfway, Oregon. We are 55 miles from Baker City-the closest city to us.

The possibility of re-opening this corridor (the least well-served in the country) is exciting and important. Besides the obvious need to reduce our carbon emissions and congestion of our highways, there is an aging population needing access to medical facilities in larger areas such as Boise, ID and Portland, OR. Winter weather conditions all too frequently closed the I-84 interstate while trains can continue through. There are economic benefits of bringing tourists to the area. There is also the benefit of bringing family and friends together.

Passenger rail service could once again create for all ages access to the rest of the country, its arts, festivals and universities.

The other thing I would like to point out is that Eastern Oregon has lost most bus service. It is now impossible for myself and others in the surrounding area to travel to Boise or Portland and any city inbetween. The only reason for this was not enough ridership, meaning the bus company (Flix) was not making enough money. That is not a good enough reason. I would urge you to support your constituents in bringing back both the train and bus service,

On a personal note, my family lives on the east coast. I have had the opportunity to travel by train across the country a number of times and have thoroughly enjoyed it. My husband and I feel it is the only way to travel.

Unfortunately, my husband and I need to drive at least 4 hours just to catch the train. We also have to stay overnight at a hotel before we can get on the train due to scheduling. We gladly do this because of the benefits of train riding.

However, it would be much more convenient to just drive 55 miles to Baker City to get on the train whether for vacation, shopping or medical appointments to Boise or Portland. This also holds true for the bus service we no longer have.

Please consider re-instating The Pioneer Rail Passenger train through Eastern Oregon as well as bus service.

Thank you.
Susan Bolgiano
Halfway, Oregon

