

My name is Jon Nuxoll. I am from Eugene and president of AORTA (Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates). My remarks here are in addition to written testimony AORTA has already submitted to the committee.

AORTA supports HB3231 and HB3233 as a means of improving efficiency of existing service between Eugene and Vancouver, B.C., and as a vehicle for taking advantage of opportunities for new service. We're especially appreciative of Rep. Nathanson and Sen. Gorsek as co-chairs of the rail caucus for sponsoring these.

HB3233 creates the potential for multi-state compacts comparable to the Southern Rail Commission (Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama) which just restored service within the past year between New Orleans and Mobile, or a New England Rail Authority that for years has coordinated service between the other Portland (Maine) and Boston.

Amtrak and the federal government are asking us: What do we want? This lets Oregon and our region answer the question. Among the possibilities:

- Twice-daily service along the south bank of the Columbia, with restored east-west service and shifting the Spokane-Portland *Empire Builder* to the Oregon side of the river, serving a greater population.
- Splitting a train from Boise at Hermiston or Hinkle, with one section to Seattle and another to Portland.
- Coordinated *Cascades* service across the Columbia River; Oregon and Washington have separate plans for their sections of the Seattle-Portland corridor.

In addition to Washington and British Columbia, AORTA urges inclusion of Idaho in this bill. A measure last session directing cooperation with Idaho on restoring east-west service sunsetted; AORTA feels this is premature especially as Idaho has taken the lead on pursuing federal support for restored service. We would love to see new service between Salt Lake City and Boise; we would hate to see it end at Boise ... and recent Federal Railroad Administration long-distance routes identifies Seattle as an endpoint. And Amtrak's board now includes Elaine Clegg of Boise, another reason for Oregon to be working with Idaho.