Friends of
French Prairie

Friends of French Prairie
is an Oregon non-profit corporation

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February 7, 2025

To: Senate Committee on Veterans, Emergency Management, Federal & World Affairs

RE: Oppose Testimony on Senate Concurrent Resolution 2

Friends of French Prairie has been involved in the fifteen-year-long litigation and legal dispute regarding the Aurora State Airport, and thus has become quite knowledgeable about many of the facts and characteristics of the airport, to same nothing of it's limitations.

For context, it is worthy of not that the Draft Master Plan for the Aurora State Airport states " Aurora State Airport is located on a constrained site." Part of the current problem that the Department of Aviation faces is that there are many Modifications of Standards (i.e. variances) that the Federal Aviation Administration considers significant deviations from required safety standards, again because of the efforts to develop this General Aviation airport into something the site itself does not allow.

Specific to Concurrent Resolution 2, we are troubled that the sponsor of this resolution has not only chosen to promote some of the positive attributes of this airport, at the expense of the limitations that it has, but has also made false or misleading statements about the airport and its capabilities.

The Resolution centers on the Aurora State Airport's emergency preparedness and response role, however at least three "Whereas" statements are factually incorrect or based on inaccurate assumptions.

[Pg. 1; 19-21} Whereas soil studies at the airport predict a negligible soil settlement following a major seismic event, which indicates that the runway, taxiways and parking aprons will likely remain fully operational with very little needed repair;

The Aurora State Airport and surrounding vicinity are described in geologic maps produced by the Oregon Department of Geological and Mineral Industries [Produced with funding by the State of Oregon and the U.S. Geological Survey]. Clearly shown in these maps and detailed in the report accompanying them is that portions of the Aurora Airport are subject to significant earthquakes and associated significant earthquake-related effects (liquefaction and amplification) that a moderate to severe earthquake would in all likelihood render the runway and much of the airport unusable.

These maps specifically illustrate the following:

The **Relative Earthquake Hazard Map** of the Aurora Airport indicates that the southern half of the existing runway, and all of the proposed runway extension, "based on the combined effects of ground shaking application, liquefaction, and earthquake-induced landslides" are within "Zone B — **Intermediate to high hazard"**. (Zone A is Highest hazard and Zone D is Lowest hazard).

The **Relative Amplification Hazard Map** of the Aurora Airport indicates that the southern half of the existing runway, and all of the proposed runway extension, "based on the degree to which shaking from a given earthquake is likely to amplify" are within the "**Medium amplification hazard** (UBC soil type D)". (UBC soil type E has the Highest amplification hazard and UBC soil type C has the Lowest amplification hazard).

The **Relative Liquefaction Hazard Map** of the Aurora Airport indicates that the southern half of the existing runway, and all of the proposed runway extension, "based on the likelihood that liquefaction will occur in a given earthquake" is within the "**Medium liquefaction hazard** zone.

The **Relative Hazard Map Earthquake-Induced Landslides** of the Aurora Airport indicates that the southern half of the existing runway, and all of the proposed runway extension, "based on the possibility that a given earthquake will trigger landslides", are within the "**Low landslide hazard**" zone; the northern half of the Aurora Airport is outside of the Relative Earthquake-Induced Hazard zone.

Maps Download: http://www.oregongeology.org/pubs/ims/p-ims.htm

[Pg. 2; 12-13} Whereas the airport is surrounded by agricultural lands that during an emergency can be repurposed as staging areas for use in emergency management operations;

The Aurora State Airport is for the most part surrounded by agricultural lands. However, there are very important details to consider that would significantly limit the ability of those lands to be repurposed as staging areas for use in emergency management operations.

- The land directly west of the airport (across Hwy 551) is the residential neighborhood of Deer Creek Estates, and the EFU ag land north of this neighborhood is occupied by two agricultural businesses: Anderson Hay and Grain and Smith Gardens, and the properties are fully occupied.
- The north end of the airport is bounded by Arndt Road, and the ag land directly north of Arndt Road is bounded by high voltage power lines, creating an operational hazard.
- The ag land to the south of the airport (directly south of Kiel Road) is six to eight feet lower in elevation than the airport runway, and is a large hazelnut orchard.
- The ag land to the east of the airport is EFU ag land in cultivation for fresh vegetable crops.

It is only the ag land east of the airport that could easily and rapidly be repurposed as a staging area. Further, this ag land is separated from the Aurora Airport by Airport Road, one of the two major roads into the City of Aurora, and which would clearly pose traffic conflicts, etc.

{Pg. 2; 14-15} Whereas the airport was constructed as a military airport and its runway was designed to be capable of landing heavy military-type aircraft;

The Aurora Airport was originally constructed as a military airport during WWII, but it was not a principal US Army Air Corps airport. It was known as the Aurora Flight Strip, was an outlying (supporting) airfield to Portland Army Air Base for military aircraft training flights. The size of aircraft able to operate at airports is a function of the airfield design, most specifically runway width, length and strength. The runway at the Aurora State Airport is 5,004 feet long, 100 feet wide and has a strength rating of 45,000 pounds. Specific to the statement "capable of landing heavy military-type aircraft, see following manufacturer specifications for the major fixed wing and rotary wing military transport aircraft:

Lockheed C-5 Galaxy military transport aircraft - Maximum Cargo: 281,001 pounds; Maximum Takeoff Weight: 840,000 pounds; Empty weight: 374,000 pounds; Wingspan: 223 feet.

Lockheed C-130 Hercules - Maximum Normal Payload: C-130E, 36,500 pounds; Maximum Takeoff Weight: C-130E/H: 155,000 pounds; Empty Weight: 74,345 pounds; Wingspan: 132 feet.

Boeing Vertol CH-46 Sea Knight – Maximum Normal Payload: 7,000 pounds; Maximum Takeoff Weight: 24,300; Empty Weight: 12-13,000 pounds

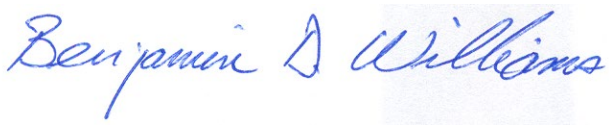
Boeing CH-47 Chinook - Maximum Normal Payload: 24-26,000 pounds; Maximum Takeoff Weight: 50,000; Empty Weight: 24,578 pounds

Sikorsky CH-53E Super Stallion – Maximum Normal Payload: 30,000; Maximum Takeoff Weight: 69,750; Empty Weight: 33,226 pounds

Thus it is clear that even in normal operating conditions military fixed wing aircraft are too large to use the Aurora State Airport, and it is limited to transport helicopters. This would be even more the case following a major earthquake event that severely damages much of the runway and taxiway.

We encourage the Committee to address these problems by way of amendment to correct the record.

Sincerely



Ben Williams, President