

Submitter: Miki and David Barnes
On Behalf Of: Oregon Aviation Watch
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB715

March 20, 2025

Dear Co-Chairs Senator Gorsek, Representative McLain and Members of the Joint Committee on Transportation,

Thank you to the committee for holding a hearing on SB715 and to Senator Gorsek and Representatives Frederick, Ruiz and Pham for sponsoring this bill.

We are writing to voice our support for SB715 which establishes a Cascadia High Speed Rail Task Force.

The construction of high speed rail along the Cascadia Corridor could provide a number of benefits including a reduction in vehicle traffic congestion and pollution. It could also reduce short haul flights between Portland, Seattle, Vancouver BC, and Eugene.

Aviation, one of the most polluting modes of transportation on the planet, generates enormous amounts of noise over both urban, rural and woodland communities. High speed rail, by contrast, offers a quieter and far less polluting option.

Rather than depleting the general fund, the \$10 million required for the project could be made available by reducing Connect Oregon money awarded to aviation projects and redirecting these resources towards developing high speed rail - a transportation option that has the potential to benefit the entire population rather than a few pilots and airport owners.

Many of the airports receiving Connect Oregon (CO) grants are general aviation facilities that serve the less than one-quarter of one percent of the population who can afford to own, lease and charter aircraft and jets. A outsized portion of CO money is directed towards airport infrastructure projects that primarily serve hobbyists, recreational pilots, private jet owners, the for-profit flight training industry, and other aviation businesses. The majority of Oregonians who struggle to pay their rent and mortgages as well as childcare expenses, medical bills, utilities, student loans and transportation costs, have neither the financial wherewithal nor the inclination to use these highly polluting facilities.

In closing, we wish to thank you for proposing a transportation option that can reshape Oregon's future by investing in affordable, rapid transportation for everyone

along the Cascadia Corridor.

Sincerely,

Miki and David Barnes
Oregon Aviation Watch