



March 12, 2025

Joint Committee on Transportation
Oregon State Legislature

Subject: Support for House Bill 2153 – Increasing Jet-A Fuel Tax to Sustain and Enhance Oregon’s Aviation Infrastructure

Dear Committee Members,

On behalf of the City of Burns and the Burns Municipal Airport, I am writing to express our strong support for House Bill 2153, which proposes a modest increase in the Jet-A fuel tax to generate additional revenue for the Aviation System Action Program (ASAP) and the Critical Oregon Airport Relief (COAR) grant program. This essential funding will sustain and enhance Oregon's aviation infrastructure, ensuring the long-term viability of airports like ours.

The Burns Municipal Airport plays a critical role in supporting our local economy, facilitating emergency services, and providing access to vital resources for our community. Despite the success of the ASAP and COAR programs, demand consistently exceeds available funding, leaving multiple projects unfunded in past grant cycles. As infrastructure needs grow and construction costs rise, a sustainable funding source is crucial to maintaining a safe, reliable, and resilient aviation network across Oregon.

House Bill 2153 is a necessary step toward ensuring equitable access to resources for airports of all sizes. These grant programs distribute funding across a diverse range of airports, from small rural airports like ours to larger regional hubs, ensuring that each community has the opportunity to maintain and improve its aviation facilities. This is especially important for rural areas like Harney County, where the Burns Municipal Airport serves as a lifeline for medical flights, wildfire response efforts, and economic development initiatives.

Furthermore, the ASAP and COAR programs are instrumental in leveraging federal dollars. State grant programs often provide the matching funds required to unlock larger federal investments, multiplying the impact of state-level contributions. Without this critical funding, many airports would struggle to complete necessary upgrades to aging infrastructure, enhance safety measures, or adapt to emerging aviation technologies.

A modest increase in the Jet-A fuel tax would enable the Oregon Department of Aviation (ODAV) to continue supporting airports statewide, ensuring they remain operational, safe, and ready to meet the needs of Oregon’s communities and industries. We have directly benefited from these programs and recognize their importance in maintaining a robust and resilient aviation system.

We respectfully urge your support for House Bill 2153 and encourage the continued investment in Oregon’s aviation infrastructure. Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. If you require additional information or would like to discuss how this program has directly benefited our community, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judy Erwin".

Judy Erwin
City Manager
City of Burns, Oregon