

**March 23, 2025**

To: Members of the Joint Transportation Committee

Oregon Legislature

900 Court St. NE

Salem, OR 97304

Subject: Support for Jet Fuel Tax Increase to Strengthen the Oregon Department of Aviation and the ASAP Grant Program

Dear Chairs McLain and Gorsek and members of the committee,

On behalf of the Law Enforcement Drone Association (LEDA), I am writing to express our strong support for the proposed increase in the jet fuel tax (HB2153) to provide essential funding for the Oregon Department of Aviation (ODAV) and expand the Aviation System Action Plan (ASAP) grant program. As an organization dedicated to the responsible use of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) in public safety, we recognize the importance of maintaining and modernizing Oregon's aviation infrastructure—not only for traditional aircraft but also for the future of **advanced air mobility (AAM) and emerging aviation technologies**.

Oregon's aviation network plays a critical role in **public safety, emergency response, and disaster relief**. Many law enforcement agencies, including those that rely on UAS for search-and-rescue missions, crime scene investigations, and wildfire surveillance, depend on a well-maintained and well-funded aviation system. Airports serve as command centers for aerial operations, providing crucial support for law enforcement, emergency medical services, and wildfire suppression efforts. **With wildfires becoming more frequent and severe, ensuring that our aviation infrastructure is strong and reliable is a matter of public safety.**

At present, ODAV is responsible for maintaining **28 state-owned airports with only three staff members**, an unsustainable workload that limits the agency's ability to support critical aviation infrastructure. Increasing the jet fuel tax will allow ODAV to enhance staffing, improve facilities, and better integrate **new technologies such as drones and electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) aircraft** into Oregon's aviation ecosystem. Advanced air mobility has the potential to revolutionize public safety, medical transport, and disaster response, but its success depends on **robust airport infrastructure, regulatory support, and sustainable funding**.

Investing in aviation today means preparing Oregon for the future. Strengthening the ODAV's resources will not only support the aircraft and pilots that serve our communities

today but also pave the way for **safer, more efficient, and more innovative air operations in the years to come**. By approving this funding measure, the Legislature will be **ensuring that Oregon remains at the forefront of aviation technology, safety, and emergency response**.

We urge you to support this critical funding initiative. Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions or would like additional insight on how this investment will benefit law enforcement and the broader aviation community.

Sincerely,



**Kyle Williams**

Vice-President

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