



THE CITY OF VALE, OREGON

Malheur County Seat



Historic stop on the Oregon Trail

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March 24, 2025

Joint Committee on Transportation
Oregon State Capitol 900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97701

RE: Support for HB 2153

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

Co-chairs Gorsek and McLain, Co-Vice Chairs Starr and Boshart Davis, and members of the Joint Committee on Transportation:

On behalf of Miller Memorial Airpark and the City of Vale, I am writing to express strong support for the proposed increase in the jet fuel tax (HB2153), which will provide essential funding for the Oregon Department of Aviation (ODAV) and expand the Aviation System Action Plan (ASAP) fund. As a recipient of grant funding from ODAV, we have seen firsthand how these resources are crucial in maintaining and improving airport infrastructure, safety, operational readiness, and emergency response efforts.

The ASAP grant program has been instrumental in allowing our airport to pave a taxi way/parking area in 2023, hiring engineers to create a plan for development of leased hangar lots, and the most recent grant will help start construction for the leased hanger lots. Without the funding from the COAR grant, none of the recent or past projects would be possible. The first and only hanger in Vale was built just after WWII.

Additionally, the ASAP grant program offers the following key benefits to Oregon airports:

- **Equitable Access to Resources:** Funding is distributed across airports of all sizes, from small rural airstrips to regional hubs, working to ensure each airport has an opportunity.
- **Economic and Community Impact:** Airports support local economies, tourism, emergency services, and wildfire response efforts — benefiting both urban and rural areas.
- **Systemwide Resiliency:** ASAP grants help airports prepare for future challenges, whether upgrading aging infrastructure, enhancing safety measures, or adapting to evolving aviation technologies.
- **Leveraging Federal Dollars:** State grant programs often provide the matching funds required to unlock significantly larger federal investments, multiplying the impact of state-level contributions.

ODAV has awarded 257 grants to Oregon airports, distributing over \$20.8 million toward projects with a collective value of nearly \$308 million. These improvements at not only Miller Memorial Airpark but airports all across Oregon benefit general aviation and economic development and enhance Oregon airports' ability to support critical services including wildfire response and disaster relief operations. Despite the grant program's success, demand consistently outpaces available funding. As infrastructure needs grow, and construction costs rise, a sustainable funding source is vital to maintaining a safe, reliable, and resilient aviation network across Oregon.

Oregon's aviation system contributes significantly to the state's economy, supporting local businesses, tourism, and transportation. However, sustainable and dedicated funding is necessary to keep our aviation network strong and resilient. A modest increase in the jet fuel tax would provide the ODAV with the necessary resources to continue supporting airports across the state while preparing for future challenges.

We strongly urge you to support this funding measure and help ensure that Oregon's airports can continue serving their communities effectively. Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact me using the email or phone listed below if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

Todd Fuller
City Manager
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