

Submitter: Brian Ettling
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1202
Co-Chairs Gorsek, McLain, and members of the Committee.

My name is Brian Ettling. For the last 8 years, my wife and I have lived in outer northeast Portland. Before that, for 25 years from 1992 to 2017, I was a seasonal park ranger at Crater Lake National Park in southern Oregon. I am originally from St. Louis, Missouri.

Let me say that I first fell in love with Oregon by traveling into the state by train. In July 1988, my parents, younger sister and I traveled on a train route named The Pioneer, which went from Salt Lake City, Utah to Portland, Oregon. This was my first time seeing Oregon. One of the highlights of this train route was traveling through the Columbia River Gorge.

The Gorge was impressive with towering hills and mountains on either side as the wide Columbia River straddled the Oregon and Washington border. I distinctly remember getting a quick peak of the 12,000-foot-high Mt. Adams as the train rode west of Hood River. My wife Tanya and I moved to Portland, OR in 2017. I feel nostalgia for that first train ride now when we drive through Hood River on I-84. This freeway goes along the same route through the Gorge as The Pioneer did, and I get that same fast glimpse of Mt. Adams that I saw from the train in 1988.

That train ride through the Gorge gave me a yearning to see more of Oregon. It motivated me four years later in 1992 to take a seasonal job at Crater Lake National Park in southern Oregon so I could see more of the state. Sadly, The Pioneer Amtrak route was discontinued in 1997. Hopefully, current efforts, such as possibly this bill, will enable Amtrak to bring back that train route.

After I graduated from William Jewell College in Kansas City, Missouri in May 1992, I immediately took a train to Oregon on graduation night to spend the summer working at Crater Lake National Park. I took the Coast Starlight Train from Los Angeles, California to Klamath Falls, Oregon. I will never forget waking up on the train to see the beautiful scenery of southern Oregon as the train crossed into Oregon from California on the morning of May 20, 1992.

I personally can attest that it was passenger trains that brought me to Oregon. Over the years, I used passenger trains to travel from Oregon to see family in St. Louis, Missouri. Since moving to Portland in 2017, I use passenger trains annually to visit family and friends in the Seattle area. I even used to the train on time to travel to

Salem to lobby legislators during a work day in September 2019.

I believe that the state of Oregon can do so much more to promote and improve passenger rail service across the state, such as working with Amtrak to bring back The Pioneer train route, increase the frequency and efficiency of passenger rail service of the Amtrak Cascade Trains which travel from Eugene through Portland and up to Seattle WA, and even expand the Westside Express Service (WES) trains which now travels from Beaverton to Wilsonville to eventually expand service to Salem and even Eugene.

I think that passage of SB 1202 to create the Oregon Rail and Transit Department could help improve Oregon passenger rail service.

I want to thank the Chief Sponsors Senator Gorsek and Pham, as well as sponsors Reps. Gamba and Mannix for their hard work and dedication to create and introduce this bill.

Thank you for considering my opinion in weighing your support for this bill.