

April 16, 2025

Oregon State Legislature
Senate Committee on Rules

Re; Testimony in support of SR 2.

Committee Chair Jama and fellow committee members,

Bottom line up Front – I urge you to support SR 2.

Taken from the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the definition of resiliency as applied to human beings is-

2: an ability to recover from or adjust easily to [adversity](#) or change : **RESILIENCE SENSE 2**

“... the *resiliency* of nature and humans in the wake of fires, floods, earthquakes, volcanoes, and other destructive forces.” ---Richard K. Snow et al .

Again, citing the same dictionary, is the definition of air ambulance.

: an aircraft and especially a helicopter equipped for transporting the injured or sick

“Most *air ambulances* carry critically ill or injured patients, whose condition could rapidly change for the worse.”— Anthony A. Helbling, *Flying*

I am Anthony A. Helbling and I know something about helping people.

From my time in Boy Scouts reaching up through Eagle Scout, on through years as an Army officer flying in and commanding a MedEvac unit here in Oregon as well as commanding a ground medical unit, I’ve served in roles helping people in their worst moments. Beyond that, having personally experienced the loss of a home to a massive Oregon forest fire, and I’ve also helped my own elderly parents evacuate to safety. Now reaching the end of my career, my work for a national electrical utility construction company as a logistics manager, focuses on planning for construction of major power line projects to include the establishment of our logistics bases during responses to disasters. We helped and are continuing to get the power back on... most recently in Florida after the hurricane and now in the Los Angeles DURING and after the multiple huge fire disasters.

This bill is about the importance of planning, preparing and being ready. This bill is about the assets and opportunities presented by a well-equipped, well-maintained group of facilities staffed by competent people in an area that if affected by a man made or natural disaster, will be ready to help other people at their worst. All at Aurora State Airport.

Having spent a significant portion of my career in Emergency and Logistics Management, I can tell you what we look for in a good site to respond to disasters. We look for areas with open flat spaces for emergency hospitals, laydown areas for medical and food supplies, laydown areas for construction materials and sanitation equipment needed for the restoration of basic services. We look for water sources to include current drinking water, irrigation wells, and flowing creeks and rivers. We look for networks of roads and how they connect to other areas. We look for available and recognized landing areas for aviation assets that will more commonly be used for initial responses than ground-based assets.

Aurora State Airport with its aircraft, people, hangars, ramps and its surrounding lands, agricultural fields and associated irrigation wells as well as the nearby Pudding River provides for these things.

In the Oregon State Cascadia Event Plan, Section 6 “Plan Execution”, several of the tasks focus on the importance of things I just mentioned. Specific to Aurora Airport is our people and aircraft – most importantly the helicopters. In the first 72 hours it will be civil aircraft, both helicopters and smaller fixed wing that will help with the movement of critically injured and surveying the extent of damage. It’s not just the aircraft on hand but the people that will staff the aircraft and keep them flying while also assisting in the support of subsequent responding military aircraft. This situation is unique to Aurora State Airport. No other airport in the state has this cross section of aircraft and supporting infrastructure paired with the level of expertise of our people.

I urge you to look hard at the airport opposition’s claims on the soil stability issue. In most of their submitted maps of the airport from before 2013. There in key – there is an **IMPORTANT NOTICE** that says,

“This map depicts only amplification hazardous zones that are based on limited geological data as described in the accompanying report. At any given site in the map area, the maps for other types of hazards may show different hazard levels and need to be taken into consideration along with this map. ***This map cannot replace site specific investigations.*** (emphasis added) Some appropriate uses are discussed in the accompanying report.”

We’ve done specific site investigations at the airport and found the airport and associated structures will not be heavily affected by the “Cascadia” event as claimed by the opposition. Aurora State Airport will still be there and ready to help.

Additionally, please take the time to read the Resiliency Study we prepared for Oregon Department of Aviation. Private industry has committed to being ready to help our neighbors and has outlined our abilities and assets in the document.

Bottom Line - I urge you to support SR 2.

Tony Helbling

President
Aurora Airport Improvement Association