



## MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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April 16, 2025

Chair Senator Kayse Jama  
Vice-Chair Senator Daniel Bonham  
Members of the Senate Committee on Rules

### **RE: Support for Senate Resolution 2 – Recognition of Aurora State Airport**

Dear Chair Jama, Vice Chair Bonham, and Members of the Committee,

The Marion County Board of Commissioners writes in strong support of Senate Resolution 2 and extend our sincere thanks to Senator Girod for his leadership in bringing this much-needed recognition forward.

Aurora State Airport is one of Oregon's most valuable assets in emergency preparedness and disaster response. Located just miles from the heart of the Willamette Valley, the airport is uniquely equipped and strategically positioned to serve as a central hub in times of crisis, whether natural disasters like wildfires and earthquakes or critical medical emergencies.

Senate Resolution 2 rightly acknowledges what so many in the emergency management and aviation communities already know: Aurora is not just a general aviation airport, it is a resilient and indispensable component of Oregon's public safety infrastructure.

The Aurora Airport is home to nationally recognized emergency aviation providers, including Life Flight Network, the largest air medical transport provider in the Pacific Northwest; Columbia Helicopters and Helicopter Transport Services, which play critical roles in wildfire response and recovery across the state; and Wilson Construction Company, a leading builder of electric utility infrastructure whose logistics and emergency response expertise support disaster recovery efforts across Oregon, the nation, and the World. These assets are already saving lives and protecting communities every year.

In the event of a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake, when roads and railways will be impassable, the ability to deliver aid and evacuate the injured by air will be a matter of life and death. Studies and site investigations have confirmed that Aurora's runway, taxiways, and surrounding infrastructure are located on geologically stable ground, allowing it to remain operational when other facilities fail. Its proximity to flat open land, water resources, and highway access further enhances its role as a regional staging area for emergency operations.

State and federal agencies have already recognized Aurora's importance:

- The 2013 Oregon Resilience Plan designated Aurora as a Tier 3 recovery airport.

- The 2018 Oregon Aviation Plan elevated it to Tier 2 and formally recognized it as a Federal Staging Area in consultation with FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security.

We also urge the committee to consider the results of the comprehensive Resiliency Study prepared for the Oregon Department of Aviation, which outlines the full extent of private-sector investment and readiness at the airport.

The facts are clear: Aurora State Airport is a critical component of Oregon's resiliency and response network, and Senate Resolution 2 ensures it receives the recognition it deserves.

We respectfully urge your support for SR 2.

Sincerely,



Danielle Bethell  
Chair



Colm Willis  
Commissioner



Kevin Cameron  
Commissioner