

February 19, 2008

Governor Theodore R. Kulongoski  
160 State Capitol  
900 Court Street  
Salem, Oregon 97301-4047

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger  
State Capitol Building  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Governor Chris Gregoire  
Office of the Governor  
PO Box 40002  
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

AN I-5 INTERSTATE ELECTRIC HIGH SPEED TRAIN BORDER TO BORDER.  
NOW OR NEVER

Dear Sir/Madam:

Currently, the Port of Portland, City of Portland (City) and Portland-Vancouver metropolitan community are engaged in a collaborative planning effort to create an integrated long-range development plan for Portland International Airport (PDX) known as Airport Futures. This is a groundbreaking effort to involve the region in a discussion on how to best accommodate future aviation related growth using a sustainability framework. The City and Port have convened a 30-member Planning Advisory Group (PAG) to guide the planning process by developing a 20 year master plan for PDX together with a land use plan reflecting the growth management goals of the City. Forecasting transportation needs for PDX will be one of the cornerstones of our efforts. With a rapidly changing world, we now have to rely less on a look backward and instead focus more on a look ahead which is somewhat obscured and is not as clear as we would like.

One of the issues that some members of the Airport Futures PAG believe needs to be factored in the dual planning effort is the potential to meet some of the capacity needs at PDX through High Speed Rail. The undersigned members of the PAG urge you to include a High Speed Passenger Rail Route aligned with the I-5 corridor in your plans to repair, upgrade and modernize the State of Oregon Transportation System. Ultimately, we believe that a High Speed Regional Rail Route should go border to border from San Diego to Vancouver B.C.

Our request and urging is in part driven by our review of proposed Oregon State efforts to repair, upgrade and modernize its surface transportation system by identifying specific goals. We did not find any references or proposals for high-speed rail in this plan. If this is just an oversight, or the result of a belief by state planners that passenger transportation by air, at least on the West Coast, will be the sole model in perpetuity, we find this rather unfortunate and disturbing as there are many new and serious worldwide challenges to this model.

In 2006, an average of nearly 19,000 airline passengers were en route daily through PDX to and from the major metropolitan centers along the tri-state I-5 corridor, assuming that relatively few traveled one way only.

The principal purpose behind our urging is to create a high value supplementary transportation mode as well as a back-up for regional air and automobile travel, where other than bus and Amtrak there is none today. Challenges to worldwide demand and supply of petroleum, together with truly meaningful responses to global climate change now drive our request. Growth forever, including that of aviation, is just not sustainable!

We are obviously aware of the immense size of such an undertaking, not just in cost, but also in the planning and construction phase, which we estimate to be at least a ten-year process. We are also aware that in addition to providing significant opportunities for employment and for supplying materials, it will create wide-scale interruption and inconveniences during the implementation phases. Principal reasons are to replace a rather inadequate West Coast rail system now, both in alignment and structural integrity to serve adequately and safely for true high-speed operation. We realize that this would require: 1) a dedicated right-of-way, fenced and, without grade crossing, and 2) single operational ownership with passenger service at all times taking precedence over freight movement, which currently is not the case.

It certainly is not difficult to visualize that seriously delaying the creation of a high-speed train system/route will magnify the challenges and cost many, many times. Presently, 81% of Oregon's 3.5 million population lives in the counties transected by the I-5 corridor, and growth there is forecasted to occur at an especially high rate. A growing population means many more improvements and infrastructure additions. Delaying construction of a high-speed rail by up to 50 years, as some have suggested, would in our opinion be a near fatal mistake likely pointing toward an impossibility. Finally, we wonder, with all the talk about the need and goal to reduce our carbon footprint by anywhere from 20% to the 80% level, whether this will just remain talk only and will we accept all its consequences?!

To illustrate our point, we have found that to fill up a Boeing 747-400 jumbo jet will require 57,285 gallons of jet fuel. When burned it will produce 293 metric (long) tons of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). To replace this amount of petroleum-based fuel with oil from canola with a production rate of 40-50 gallons/acre, would require harvest from about 1,200 acres for one fill up only. With ethanol produced from corn, one fill up would consume output from about 1,000 acres. At an energy gain of 10-15% from growing, cultivating, fertilizing, harvesting and processing alternative renewable energy, a case for optimism is difficult to make. Liquification of coal via the Fischer-Tropsch process used in Germany during World War II would be economically cost prohibitive.

For a more detailed discussion of the issues and arguments offered here, we have included an attachment prepared by one of the PAG Members.

Members of PAG are quite aware that our request to you is outside our charge. However, having to explore future transportation, we feel we would be amiss if we did not raise this issue and call it to your attention.

The request expressed in this letter reflects the *personal* views of some PAG members – not the full PAG membership. It does not necessarily reflect the philosophies or positions of PAG members' employers, associations, public agencies or interest groups.

We would appreciate your consideration of our request.

Respectfully,

Attachment: Pages 12-17 of 4-07 NEPA and PDX Expansion Erwin Bergman Memo

CC:

Senator Ron Wyden  
230 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg  
Washington, D.C 20510-3703

Senator Gordon Smith  
404 Russell, Senate Office Bldg  
Washington D.C. 20510

Representative Earl Blumenauer  
729 NE Oregon, Suite 115  
Portland, OR 97232

Representative Peter DeFazio  
405 E 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Eugene, OR 97401

Representative Darlene Hooley  
21570 Willamette Drive  
West Linn, OR 97068

Representative David Wu  
620 SW Main St., Suite 115  
Portland, OR 97232

Sen. Rick Metsger  
Chair, House Transportation Committee  
900 Court St. NE S-307  
Salem, OR 97301

Representative E. Terry Beyer  
Chair, House Transportation Committee  
900 Court St. NE., H-388  
Salem, OR 97301

Commissioner Sam Adams  
City of Portland  
City Hall  
1221 SW Fourth Avenue  
Portland, OR 97204