

MARK JOHNSON
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 52



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
900 COURT ST NE
SALEM, OR 97301

May 24, 2013

Ways & Means Subcommittee
on Capital Construction

Dear Co-Chairs and Members of the Subcommittee:

It is my pleasure to write a letter in support of the *ConnectOregon* multimodal infrastructure funding program. This program has contributed to the economic vitality and industry in our region in the Gorge. The transportation framework supplied by Mount Hood Railroad is important in getting local products to a national market and supporting tourism.

The railroad has proven to be a vital part of the area's economic development, from Hood River to Parkdale, Oregon and beyond. As a revitalized means of transport, through both passenger and freight service, the little towns in the valley just south of the Gorge have all been positively impacted. Restaurants and other businesses have been built to service tourist traffic through the railroad's excursion train rides. The railroad is transporting lots of local lumber on its way to market, and has just purchased refrigerated rail cars to haul our local produce and award-winning wines.

Smaller short lines sometimes need a helping hand, as infrastructure is tremendously expensive. The demise of these railroads can cut short regional success and the possibility of future expansion. *ConnectOregon* is a proven way to keep an area economically viable, and Mount Hood Railroad is just one example of the public benefit the program brings.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter and your foresight in continuing the *ConnectOregon* program. It is especially helpful to rural Oregon, including the City of Prineville Railway and Freight Depot in Central Oregon, the Coos Bay Rail Link in Southern Oregon, Lake Railway in Lakeview and other areas that rely on the industry.

Please see the attached letter from Mt. Hood Forest Products in Hood River. This letter was written in support of Mount Hood Railroad's application for a *ConnectOregon* IV grant.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Johnson'.

Representative Mark Johnson