

DOUG WHITSETT
STATE SENATOR
DISTRICT 28



Committees:
Member:
Joint Ways & Means

OREGON STATE SENATE
900 COURT ST NE
SALEM, OR 97301

May 24, 2013

TO: Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction

RE: Support for *ConnectOregon*

Co-Chairs and Committee Members:

The local economy and transportation sector has benefitted in Senate District 28 from the *ConnectOregon* program. Allow me to give you several examples.

Lake Railway in Lakeview, Oregon serves an area that is geographically isolated yet rich in natural resources. A perlite mining and lumber mill are the county's major private employers, and each depends on the railroad to provide consistent service to get their products to market. Due to Lake County's location far from the state's ports and industrial centers, rail transport is the only cost-effective means of shipping perlite and lumber. These industries are steadily growing, employ a large percentage of the community, and comprise a substantial portion of the county's tax base. *ConnectOregon* grants have allowed for updating and repairing dilapidated parts of the railroad's track, originally built in the 1930s, and also installing larger rail to support the bigger, heavier railcars used by modern railroad shippers.

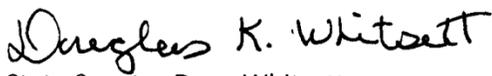
The City of Prineville Railway and Prineville Freight Depot have been successful *ConnectOregon* projects in my district as well. Prineville and Crook County have struggled to get back on solid economic footing since the 1980's when the timber industry died out. *ConnectOregon* grants have helped develop much-needed jobs and economic opportunity, as well as saving a valuable piece of infrastructure.

In 2004 the City of Prineville Railway totaled only 87 rail car loads of freight. Because of *ConnectOregon* grants, in 2013 the Railway is conservatively projecting over 750 rail car loads. Its transload center, the Prineville Freight Depot, now has developed three times the truck traffic during this time period and attracted anchor tenants and a customer base. Central Oregon industry now has a reliable way to get its goods to market in the wider world.

It is imperative to get Oregon back on its economic footing, especially in rural Oregon. Maintaining and building multi-modal infrastructure in rural and underfunded areas of our state brings the opportunity for many to prosper. It creates an environment for the transportation system as a whole to move more smoothly, which better allows good to get to market and people to their destinations.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,


State Senator Doug Whitsett
Senate District 28