



BAKER CITY OREGON

MAYOR
Kerry McQuisten
COUNCILORS
Shane Alderson
Johnny Waggoner Sr.
Joanna Dixon
Jason Spriet
Dean Guyer
Kenyon Damschen
CITY MANAGER
Jonathan Cannon

RESOLUTION NO. 3919

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING PASSENGER RAIL RESTORATION IN EASTERN OREGON

WHEREAS, Eastern Oregon has a proud railroad heritage (as the successor to the Oregon Trail) dating back to the completion of the Oregon Railway and Navigation Company and Oregon Short Line route (now Union Pacific) in 1884; and

WHEREAS, Amtrak reinstated rail passenger service on the Union Pacific route through Eastern Oregon in 1977, but discontinued it in 1997; and

WHEREAS, Much of rural America is under-served by long-distance passenger rail options and Amtrak's service map fails to recognize this shortcoming; and

WHEREAS, Greyhound operated four intercity buses daily along Interstate 84 through Eastern Oregon at the time Amtrak service was discontinued, but now only one remains; and

WHEREAS, only one community (Pendleton) in the 450 miles between Portland and Boise has scheduled air service; and

WHEREAS, despite its challenging weather, topography, and geography, no better alternate highway route to Interstate 84 across Eastern Oregon exists; and

WHEREAS, hazardous weather can inhibit travel and close Interstate 84 in Eastern Oregon for extended periods; and

WHEREAS, Vulnerable populations require specialized medical care year-round, these services continue to be more available in larger metro areas requiring additional transportation access from more rural areas; and

WHEREAS, existing Amtrak long-distance passenger trains remain popular in Oregon as evidenced by Oregon's Empire Builder and Coast Starlight trains ranking first and second respectively in overall ridership in the fiscal year 2019; and

WHEREAS, the Union Pacific route through Eastern Oregon traverses a scenic and varied landscape where a passenger train would provide quality access to landmarks and historic destinations of Oregon such as Hell's Canyon, the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center, the Blue Mountains, the Columbia River Gorge, and Multnomah Falls; and

WHEREAS, The restoration of passenger rail service would increase tourism and the economy of communities in Eastern Oregon; and

WHEREAS, the population of the Boise, Idaho metro area has increased by over 60% and the Portland, Oregon metro area has increased by over 30% since the discontinuance of

Amtrak service between the two cities in 1997; and

WHEREAS in 2008 Congress directed Amtrak to review several routes across the Northwest as part of the Railroad Safety Enhancement Act of 2008 and that study proposed restoring the Pioneer line from Portland through Boise to Salt Lake City and the North Coast Hiawatha line serving Montana and North Dakota, yet the Pioneer and Hiawatha lines have not been restored; and

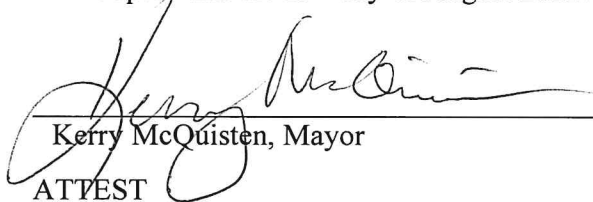
WHEREAS, passenger trains are proven to be safer, more comfortable, and more fuel-efficient than automobiles.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of Baker City, Oregon, that:


The City Council extends its appreciation to the contribution railroads have made to our great city; and

The City Council urges our state and federal elected officials to actively pursue the reinstatement of rail passenger service to Eastern Oregon through Baker City to bolster our economy, increase travel options for our citizens, and enhance our quality of life.


Adopted this the 23rd day of August 2022.


Kerry McQuisten, Mayor

ATTEST


Dallas Brockett, City Recorder

APPROVED AS TO FORM


Daniel Van Thiel, City Attorney