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To: Heather.peck@aviation.state.or.us
Subject: Pacific City RFI

I am writing in regards to the RFI for Pacific City State airport in regards to the sale to a private individual.

I am a private pilot and have been active in flying and building airplanes in Oregon for 30 years. I currently live at an airpark at the Sisters airport but maintain a hangar at Twin Oaks and am in process of purchasing another hangar at Chiloquin. I own three airplanes - an RV-4, a Bearhawk, and a V35TC turbo Bonanza.

Regarding the sale of the airport to an individual. First, I have no doubt that the intent of the prospective new owner is to maintain and enhance the airport. He clearly has an interest in aviation and in the airport and I think it would be in good hands for the short term.

However, the decision at hand should not be viewed as a short term decision. The decisions made regarding the Pacific City airport will outlive the current board and the prospective new owner. I believe the board and decision makers have a responsibility to think longer term and to consider what happens to the airport for the best interests of aviation in Oregon in timeframe beyond their service.

The current prospective owner has a clear aviation interest and will take care of the airport. What happens when he is no longer around? What interest does the estate or heirs have in maintaining the airport? I submit it is vague and uncertain at best. Is it in the best interests of aviation in Oregon to pass ownership to an individual when there can be no certainty what the interests or motivations of his / her heirs will be in maintaining the airport?

I find it most interesting that Beaver Marsh Airport is held out as a model of how this can work. Have any of you ever been to Beaver Marsh Airport (2S2)? I have flown into 2S2 a total of 4 times over the past 15 years and the state of the airport is anything but a model of how it is being preserved for aviation use. Approximately 15 years ago I flew my RV-4 into 2S2. It had to have been near the time that ownership passed from the state to an individual. The RV-4 has small wheels and is really not well suited for very rough strips. The condition of the airport 15 years ago was suitable for such a plane. I have flown in 3 additional times in my Bearhawk - most recently this very morning. The bearhawk has large 26" tires and is designed and suitable for backcountry and unimproved airstrips. The current condition of the Beaver Marsh "airport" is

almost unusable - even for a plane such as the bearhawk. There are trees growing up in the landing area approximately 2-3' tall. There are many large rocks and obstructions. The strip is rutted and in serious disrepair from 4WD vehicles playing in the mud in the winter on the strip. Clearly in the case of Beaver Marsh airport Oregon aviation has suffered the imminent loss of a usable airstrip by transferring ownership to a private entity. If you have interest, I do have pictures of the Beaver Marsh airport showing the current poor condition. Contact me if these are of interest.

As a second example I hold out the very airport at which I reside - 6K5 Sisters airport. Sisters airport was transferred to an individual many many years ago - I believe in the 1960's. Since then it has remained private ownership, public use. The airport was maintained at a reasonable level and enjoyed public access including access from approximately 20 homes in airparks built adjacent to the runway. More recently (in the last 10 years) the airport was sold to a different individual. Since that sale, the airport maintenance and use has increased significantly and the airport is enjoying a new life. That is the good part. The bad part is that the new owners are now under investigation by the state for misappropriation of Connect Oregon grant funds in excess of \$400,000. The new owners are also attempting to eliminate access by the adjacent airpark homeowners. Although the airport is in good physical shape, it is a political mess and has pitted aviation community members against each other. It is NOT good for aviation in Oregon and Sisters airport would better serve the Oregon community as a state or city owned airport.

As a positive example I will hold out Vernonia airport which is City owned. I owned a hangar for many years at Vernonia and flew out of there regularly. I also served as a board member on the Vernonia airport commission. The Vernonia airport is essentially self sustaining. The pilots and hangar owners all contribute to the maintenance and the burden on the city is minimal. I and the other owners have spent many hours sitting on a Ford 8N tractor mowing the runway. It is a great example of private cooperation and public ownership.

I believe transferring the Pacific City airport to private ownership is detrimental to the long term prospects of the airport despite the best intentions of the new prospective owner.

I also don't believe in just criticizing without offering an alternative. My alternative suggestion is this:

- Maintain public ownership of the Pacific City airport but offer a long term renewable lease to the airport to the prospective buyer instead of a sale. The lease would have to include provisions for termination if the airport is not maintained or is otherwise abused. The lease could be 30 years and renewable - it would satisfy the prospective clients interest to improve and maintain the airport for his own and other aviators for his life and beyond if there is interest. It would also preserve the public interest in assuring that the fate of Beaver Marsh doesn't fall on Pacific City.