

Name	Scott Lane
Group/Organization	Self
Address	[REDACTED]
Email	[REDACTED]
Phone	[REDACTED]
Public Comment Topic	Pacific City State Airport SOAR funds diversion

Public Comment

Dear ODAV and ODAV Board Members,

I understand that ODAV is facing a budget shortfall of approximately \$3 million, and I empathize with the difficult decisions required to bring the agency back into balance. However, I strongly oppose reducing, delaying, or diverting dedicated aviation funds that have already been committed to specific safety and infrastructure needs.

In particular, I am deeply concerned that SOAR funds already committed and earmarked for safety improvements at KPFC are being considered for diversion to address ODAV's administrative budget shortfall.

There are several important reasons why I believe this would be the wrong decision:

- These SOAR funds have already been committed to KPFC. The ODAV Board's commitment to fund these improvements should be honored. Changing that commitment after the fact undermines confidence in the SOAR program and the state's commitment to Oregon's general aviation airports.
- SOAR funds should be used for their intended purpose. Diverting funds designated for airport safety and infrastructure to address an administrative budget deficit appears inconsistent with the legislative intent behind the SOAR program. A shortfall in agency administration should not be solved by taking money away from safety improvements at Oregon's airports.
- The KPFC projects address legitimate and necessary safety and maintenance needs. These are not discretionary projects or enhancements that can simply be postponed without consequence. The funds were requested and committed because the improvements are important to the continued safe operation of the airport.
- KPFC's SOAR funding should be evaluated on its own merits. The funding commitment to KPFC should not become entangled in the ongoing zoning issues between ODAV and Tillamook County. These are separate matters. The merits and safety needs of the airport improvements should be considered independently of any disagreement over land-use or zoning issues.
- Diverting these funds is inconsistent with ODAV's own mission. ODAV's mission is to "enable and advocate for a safe and efficient aviation system that connects communities and drives economic growth." Investing committed SOAR funds in needed safety improvements at KPFC directly supports that mission. Diverting those funds to cover an administrative shortfall does not.
- KPFC is an important community asset. Pacific City Airport has a long history of serving the community and provides significant value to local residents, visitors, and businesses. Maintaining this

infrastructure benefits not only pilots, but the broader local economy and the State of Oregon.

- KPFC also provides an important resource for emergency response. Airports such as KPFC can play a critical role when emergency services are needed. Access for organizations such as Life Flight and the U.S. Coast Guard can make a meaningful difference when someone needs to be evacuated or transported during an emergency.

- There is a time-sensitive element to these improvements. My understanding is that changes to FEMA requirements could prevent the necessary safety improvements from being completed if the State does not put the committed SOAR funding to its intended purpose before 2027. If that is the case, delaying these funds could result in a lost opportunity to make improvements that are both necessary and time-sensitive.

For these reasons, I strongly support proceeding with the expenditure of the committed SOAR funds at KPFC now.

This is not simply an expenditure at one small airport. It is an investment in aviation safety, emergency access, local economic activity, and the long-term viability of Oregon's general aviation system. The State has already recognized the merit of these projects by committing the SOAR funds. I believe that commitment should be honored.

ODAV's budget shortfall is a serious issue that deserves a serious solution. However, balancing the agency's administrative budget should not come at the expense of dedicated funds intended to improve the safety and infrastructure of Oregon's airports.

I respectfully ask the ODAV Board to maintain its commitment to KPFC, protect the SOAR funds already awarded to the airport, and move forward with these safety improvements before the opportunity to do so is lost.

To do otherwise would be short-sighted and, in my view, contrary to the interests of KPFC, the local community, Oregon's aviation system, and the safety mission ODAV is charged with advancing.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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