



Tillamook County Transportation District

"Connecting the community through sustainable transit services"

April 22, 2015

Oregon Board of Forestry
Oregon Department of Forestry
Salem Headquarters
2600 State Street
Salem, Oregon 97310

Members of the Board of Forestry:

My name is Doug Pilant and I am General Manager of the Tillamook County Transportation District (TCTD). I come before you today to encourage the Board of Forestry to adopt an equitable plan for state forests that takes into account the needs of communities within the County Trust Lands.

The District offers passenger bus service county-wide as far north to Cannon Beach, south to Lincoln City, west to Pacific City. We also offer intercity bus service to Portland and Salem with connections to Amtrak, Greyhound and other regional connections to services such as TriMet and Cherriots. In addition, TCTD provides county-wide dial-a-ride services and we offer non-emergency medical transportation that provides Tillamook County's most vulnerable low income residents transportation to medical facilities in Portland, Seaside, Lincoln City, Newport and Salem. We are an important tool for residents of our county and coastal Oregon and one of the only transportation options for people without personal transportation.

Essential service providers, from Tillamook County on down rely heavily on monies received from the sale of timber on state forestlands and TCTD is no exception. Between Fiscal Year 10 and Fiscal Year 14, TCTC received \$494,801 from activity on state forestlands. This represents funding that has been critical to operating at needed service levels while allowing us to attempt service expansion so that we may better serve the residents of Tillamook County, the North Coast, and all our visitors. While the funding has been critical, it has neither been ensured nor consistent.

This year's decline in timber receipts from state lands and the continued uncertainty as to the future of timber harvests on those lands has created a budgetary scenario where we have neither the funds necessary to best serve our community, nor the certainty to budget for appropriate funding levels moving forward.

In December 1997, after the District's Board of Directors appointed its first general manager, an additional dispatcher was hired along with one clerical staff to help manage the newly formed District. At this time, the District had two drivers and then added a third driver in June 1997.

Over the past 18 years we have grown to employ a staff of 36 employees and 14 volunteers. There are currently 29 drivers, 2 dispatchers and 5 office employees as well as 8 volunteer drivers and 6 volunteer Ride Ambassadors. Despite this growth, staffing at an appropriate level remains a struggle. Our biggest challenge is to have adequate resources for operational supervision and driver training. Due to the rural environment our first buses roll-out at 4 AM and the last buses end at 9:30 PM, which means we have several hours of the day where driver supervision is performed remotely.

Meanwhile, TCTD has a Transit Visitor Center in downtown Tillamook. We have worked hard to staff the Center with volunteers. However, sustaining a volunteer workforce requires a continuous outreach effort that requires resources. We had planned to staff the Center with part-time paid employees but this year's Timber Revenue shortfall forced us to abandon that plan for the foreseeable future.

Finally, our dial-a-ride client database consists of about 1,000 residents who lack transportation. We transport about 60% of these clients to medical facilities in the Portland area where they receive cancer treatments and other medical services. When we experience revenue shortfalls this transportation service receives the highest level of scrutiny since it's the most costly service we offer.

We are also in a unique position where our Department of Transportation funding is based on service miles driven and number of trips provided. We therefore are in the unenviable position where if budget considerations were to force us to reduce services, we in turn will lose funding. It is a vicious cycle but we soldier on and try to remain as lean as possible and provide as much service as possible within our budget constraints.

Our reliance on state forestland receipts, however, makes us doubly unique in that we are dependent upon a volatile funding source stemming from state forestlands that are underutilized.

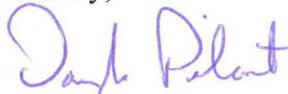
This body can help our situation and the situation of similar services throughout the Trust Counties by setting a state forest plan that ensures healthy, productive and sustainable forest ecosystems that provide a full range of social, economic, and environmental benefits to the people of Oregon.

Setting aside 30% of state lands for conservation while ensuring that 70% of state forestlands are dedicated to timber production will give Trust Land Counties like Tillamook and the wide variety of services like ours that are dependent on those funds the budget security they need to carry out their mission.

We support healthy forests and believe that we can meet the social and economic needs of the Oregon communities we serve while also ensuring the future health and longevity of Oregon state forests.

On behalf of my organization and those thousands of passengers we serve, please arrive at a forest management plan that is equitable and workable for Oregon communities.

Sincerely,



Doug Pilant
General Manager, Tillamook County Transportation District