



September 12, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

The Willamette Valley Visitors Association (WVVA) is writing to express our support for the return of commercial air service to Salem, Oregon. It has been more than 10 years since regular commercial service existed in Salem, and the region is in a prime position to welcome it back.

The visitor industry in the Salem region is stronger than ever, generating a record \$593.1 million in estimated visitor spending and an additional \$4.5 million in lodging tax revenue. * Commercial air service will further boost the economic impact of the industry, making direct travel to and from the area easier and more accessible to the millions of people who visit our area each year.

In addition, the Salem area generates 1.1 million passengers to Portland International Airport (PDX) and has a population of 530,000 people who live within a 25-mile radius of Salem.** As traffic congestion in the Portland area and the Mid-Willamette Valley continues to increase, having commercial air service in Salem will mean significantly less travel time to and from the Portland airport and reduced mileage/fuel costs. Also, a large number of room nights are lost in the Salem area due to travelers who book a room near PDX on the final night of their visit when they have an early flight the following morning. Having commercial air service in Salem would allow us to capture the room and lodging tax revenue that is currently being lost.

Salem is a "destination gateway" to culinary adventures, natural treasures and unique cultural experiences as well as a key entry point to other Oregon Wine Country adventures. Bringing commercial air service back to the region will bolster both leisure and business travel, which will in turn generate more dollars in direct visitor spending, lodging tax revenue and job creation. We fully support commercial air service in Salem and look forward to the return of this vital service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Irene Bernards".

Irene Bernards
President, Willamette Valley Visitors Association

**Dean Runyan Travel Impact Report, 1991-2017*

***Voltaire Aviation Consulting*