

# Visiting Candidate



Jessica Waters Emerald

Amtrak's Coast Starlight train stops each day in Eugene on its way north from Los Angeles, Calif., to Seattle, Wash. With budget cuts, service on Amtrak's Cascades soon may be halted between Eugene and Portland.

## Amtrak

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problem and look for additional revenue to close the gap.

"We are definitely going to do everything we can to make sure we don't lose any of that service," he said.

AORTA Director Dan McFarlang said the Cascades rail service and bus lines are vital both for Oregon's economy and for providing a solid transportation system. He said the services create 40 family-wage jobs and contribute to tourism.

"The bottom line is this is a project that brings in not only tourist dollars but also provides transportation," he said. "Obviously we think (cutting the program) is a step in the wrong direction."

Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski's budget does not include cuts to the service, spokeswoman Marian Hammond said.

Transportation officials around the state are worried about the impact the loss of Amtrak service may have and are hoping for a legislative solution.

Claudia Howells, a rail division administrator for the Oregon Department of Transportation, said the state needs a reliable source of funds in order to keep a multi-modal transportation system in place, a goal she said ODOT has a statutory directive to fulfill.

"(Oregon) must have a viable transportation system," she said. "I think it's a matter of whether you believe rail is important enough in these tough budget times."

Howells said the Pacific Northwest Rail corridor service is made

available through a contract with ODOT and Amtrak and is paid for using state funds. Without that state funding, she said, Amtrak would no longer be able to provide the transportation.

Howells added that without the rail service, Amtrak would also have little incentive anymore to contribute to the Eugene Station Project, an effort currently underway at the city level to improve the station site in Eugene.

**"We are definitely going to do everything we can to make sure we don't lose any of that service."**

**Floyd Prozanski**  
Oregon Representative  
D-Eugene

Despite the possible lack of state funding for Eugene rail services, help may come from the federal government in the future. State officials said the Bush administration's proposal for transportation financing at the federal level includes matching funds for states that are trying to improve their transportation systems.

Concerned individuals can contact Schrader at (503) 986-1720, Miller at (503) 986-1437 or committee Vice Chairman Sen. Steve Harper, R-Klamath Falls, at (503) 986-1728.

Contact the news editor at [janmontry@dailyemerald.com](mailto:janmontry@dailyemerald.com).

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