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**To:** [CityRecorder](#); [SALEM Manager](#)  
**Cc:** [Heather Dimke](#); [Laurie Dougherty](#)  
**Subject:** City Council 9/26/2022 Agenda Item 3.3a 22-382 public comment  
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Public Comment on Agenda Item 3.3a 22-382

On accepting federal grant money for commercial air service

Philip H. Carver, Ph.D.

On behalf of 350 Salem OR

Sept 25, 2022

To City Manager, Mayor and City Council

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

The background on this agenda item states:

*The \$850,000 award will be used primarily as a revenue guarantee to support air carriers in the early stages of their service to help ensure their long-term sustainability. Some of the funds will also be used to provide marketing support for the new service. Target markets identified in the grant application are Las Vegas, San Francisco, Phoenix, and Los Angeles. The airport's in-kind contributions will be the two-year waiver of landing fees and terminal space rent previously approved by City Council.*

350 Salem is concerned about the advanced stage of this process without an analysis of the risk that city general fund money will have to be used to backfill costs if airlines leave after the two-year waiver period. Also, there has also not been an analysis of the effects of commercial air service on Salem's ability to meet its greenhouse gas (GHG) emission goals. Both analyses need to begin immediately and be completed before any City funds are spent on airport improvements needed for commercial service.

Previous discussions indicated that millions of dollars in capital improvements would be needed for commercial air service, with most funds associated with airport security. Some increased operational costs, especially around fire fighting, are also likely. It is unclear how the City will pay these costs and what likelihood there is that the City's general funds will get stuck with the tab if commercial service does not continue after the two-year waiver period. Such a study is absolutely necessary.

If such an event happened it would mean low and moderate income families would be paying for a service that would primarily serve upper income families. Having not conducted such a study violates the City's pledge to view policies through an equity

lens. Such an analysis cannot be conducted with an information vacuum.

Similarly, every major action that the City takes should be looked at through a climate lens. Based on 37 years as an energy and climate economist for the Oregon Dept. of Energy and the Oregon Public Utility, it is my professional judgment that substantial commercial air service would significantly increase GHG emissions from the airport, especially in the period approaching 2050. The Council has adopted a goal of being carbon neutral by 2050.

Approaching that date much of the vehicle fleet used to drive to the Portland airport will be electric with system emissions of nearly zero. In contrast, it is very unlikely the commercial air fleet will be able to use much zero emissions fuel. There are too many competing uses for the feedstock for bio-jet fuel and production of such fuel is likely to have significant emissions. Electric or renewable hydrogen aircraft do not appear to be practical for many decades, if at all.

I have not made an estimate of the range of possible emission increase and the cost of actions to offset such emissions. If the Council is serious about its emission goals, it will ask the staff to conduct such a study.

Thanks again for the opportunity to comment.